

My Free Catechism

Book One: The Apostles' Creed

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Given this 16th day of September, 2020 at the Chancery of the Diocese of Allentown.



Reverend Eugene P. Ritz
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This catechism is intended as a supplementary learning material for children in the upper grades, but is substantial enough to be usable also by young adults and the general public. It also aims to serve as a free resource for many average Catholics who need to learn or review what the Catholic faith teaches, but who have no time nor endurance to read the voluminous and theologically precise *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

This catechism is divided into four books; namely, Book One: *The Apostle's Creed*, Book Two: *The Sacraments*, Book Three: *The Commandments*, and Book Four: *Prayer and Christian Perfection*. The books are available in the form of pdf files that may be copied, shared, printed on paper or uploaded to children's mobile devices, iPods or computer tablets.

I did not write this catechism from scratch. To save time I made use of the questions and answers from old catechisms in the public domain, particularly the *Catechism of St. Pius X*. However, I edited, expanded and updated many of the texts to reflect current Church teachings. Color texts and illustrations, which are missing in old catechisms, were added to make the book attractive to young readers.

Many of the pictures used here are also in the public domain here in the U.S., but there are a few copyrighted ones that I took the liberty of using based on the concept of "fair use," as defined by Title 17, U.S. Code §107, for educational and non-commercial purposes. Picture credits and a link to their sources and license (when available) are given at the end of the book.

External references in the texts, such as references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) or to the *1983 Code of Canon Law* (CIC), are added mainly for the use of parents or teachers who are coaching the children in learning this catechism. However, it is hoped that through the reading of select paragraphs of the CCC, many will be encouraged to read the entire book and profit from its wealth of wisdom.

Biblical texts used in this catechism are mostly from the *Douay-Challoner Rheims* version which, because they are in the public domain, I have edited slightly just to make the English less archaic for contemporary readers. The final texts may be compared with the original text of the *Douay-Challoner-Rheims* version (link below).

Although I made this book as a lay Dominican, this book is my personal project and not the project of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic. Therefore, the ideas expressed are mine alone and do not represent the endorsement or position of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic or the Order of Preachers as a whole.

USEFUL LINKS

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM>

1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC – comes from the Latin title *Codex Iuris Canonici*)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html

Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism

<https://archive.org/details/AnecdotesAndExamplesIllustrating/page/n5/mode/2up>

Douay-Challoner-Rheims Bible (public domain)

<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>



Fig 1 Madonna and Child

Artist: Giovanni Battista Salvi da Sassoferrato (1609-1685)

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Article 3: *“Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.”*

Article 4: *“Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.”*

Article 5: *“He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead.”*

Article 6: *“He ascended into Heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”*

Article 7: *“From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.”*

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PART 1 *THE APOSTLES' CREED*

HOLY SCRIPTURE

1. Where are the truths which God has revealed contained?

The truths which God has revealed are contained in Holy Scripture and in Sacred Tradition.

2. What is Holy Scripture?

Holy Scripture is the collection of books containing God's revelation, which have been written *under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit*, by the prophets, the evangelists, the Apostles and other sacred writers. (CCC 105)

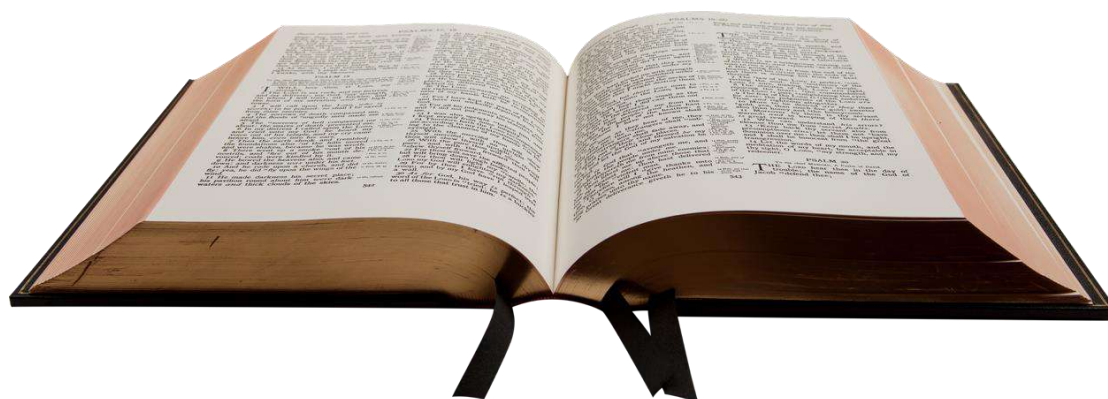


Fig 1.0.1 The Holy Scripture

3. How is Holy Scripture divided?

Holy Scripture is divided into two parts, the Old and the New Testament.

4. What is the Old Testament?

The Old Testament comprises the inspired books written before the coming of Jesus Christ.

5. What is the New Testament?

The New Testament comprises the inspired books written after the coming of Jesus Christ. The books of the New Testament that deal especially with the life of Christ are called the “Gospels.”

6. What is the common name for Holy Scripture?

The common name for Holy Scripture is the Holy Bible.

7. What is the meaning of the word “Bible”?

The word “Bible” means “The Book.” Actually the Bible is a collection of books bound together in a single volume. It is the book “par excellence,” the book of books.

8. Why is the Bible or Holy Scripture called the book "par excellence"?

Holy Scripture is so called because of the surpassing merit of its content and of the Author (the Holy Spirit) who inspired it.

9. Since the Bible is “inspired,” are the books of the Bible inspiring to read?

No. That the Bible is “inspired” means that it was written under the guidance of, and protected from error by, the Holy Spirit. It does not mean that its contents are inspiring, although some are.

10. Can there be any error in Holy Scripture?

There cannot be any error in Holy Scripture since indeed it is inspired by God. (CCC 107) The Author of the sacred books is God Himself. This does not prevent that in copies and translations that have been made, some errors on the part of the copyists or translators may have crept into it.

11. Is the reading of the Bible necessary to all Christians?

The reading of the Bible is not absolutely necessary to all Christians since they are also instructed by the Church. However, its reading is very useful and recommended to all. (CCC 133)

12. How many books are in the Bible?

There are 46 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament, for a total of 73 books. (CCC 120)

OLD TESTAMENT

Book	Abbrev.	Book	Abbrev.
Genesis	Gen	Song of Songs (Canticles)	Sg
Exodus	Ex	Wisdom	Wisd
Leviticus	Lev	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)	Sir
Numbers	Num	Isaiah	Isa
Deuteronomy	Deut	Jeremiah	Jer
Josue	Jos	Lamentations	Lam
Judges	Jgs	Baruch	Bar
Ruth	Ruth	Ezekiel	Ez
1 Samuel (1 Kings)	1 Sam	Daniel	Dan
2 Samuel (2 Kings)	2 Sam	Hosea (Osee)	Hos
1 Kings (3 Kings)	1 Kgs	Joel	Joel
2 Kings (4 Kings)	2 Kgs	Amos	Am
1 Chronicles (1 Para.)	1 Chr	Obadiah (Abdias)	Ob
2 Chronicles (2 Para.)	2 Chr	Jonah	Jon
Ezra (1 Esdras)	Ezr	Micah (Micheas)	Mi
Nehemiah (2 Esdras)	Neh	Nahum	Nah
Tobit (Tobias)	Tob	Habacuc	Hab
Judith	Jdt	Zephaniah (Sophonias)	Zep
Esther	Esth	Haggai (Aggeus)	Hg
Job	Job	Zecariah	Zec
Psalms	Ps	Malachi	Mal
Proverbs	Prov	1 Maccabees	1 Macc
Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes)	Qo	2 Maccabees	2 Macc

Some old Bibles combine Jeremiah and Lamentations into one book, thus ending with a total of only 45 books in the Old Testament.

The names given in the table are those used in most modern versions of the Bible. The names in parentheses are the names used in the old *Douay-Challoner-Rheims* version.

The books highlighted in yellow are missing in Protestant Bibles. The book of Daniel is not missing, but Daniel 3:24-90, as well as Chapters 13 and 14, are missing. Thus, the Protestant Old Testament is not complete.

NEW TESTAMENT

Book	Abbrev.	Book	Abbrev.
Matthew	Matt	1 Timothy	1 Tim
Mark	Mark	2 Timothy	2 Tim
Luke	Luke	Titus	Tit
John	John	Philemon	Phlm
The Acts of the Apostles	Acts	Hebrews	Heb
Paul to the Romans	Rom	James	Jas
1 Corinthians	1 Cor	1 Peter	1 Pet
2 Corinthians	2 Cor	2 Peter	2 Pet
Galatians	Gal	1 John	1 John
Ephesians	Eph	2 John	2 John
Philippians	Phil	3 John	3 John
Colossians	Col	Jude	Jude
1 Thessalonians	1 Thes	Revelation	Rev
2 Thessalonians	2 Thes		

13. How are passages in the Bible referenced?

All books of the Bible are divided into chapters, and every sentence, called a *verse*, is numbered. When a passage or text is quoted from the Bible, the author will usually give the name of the book, the chapter, and the verse number. Frequently, only the abbreviation, rather than the full name of the book, is given. The verse is separated from the chapter by a colon (:). For example, consider the following:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land” (Matt 5:3-4).

The symbol at the end of the quotation, Matt 5:3-4, indicates that the text was taken from the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 3 thru 4.

14. Through which means can we know the true meaning of the Holy Scripture?

We can only know the true meaning of Holy Scripture through the Church (CCC 85), because she alone is secure against error in her interpretation. Christ promised her the protection of the Holy Spirit in the words, “The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things...” (John 14:26).

15. May any translation of the Bible in the vernacular be read?

We should read only those translations of the Bible in the vernacular which have been acknowledged as faithful translations by the Catholic Church, and which have explanations also approved by the Church.

16. Why does the Church not recommend Protestant Bibles?

The Church does not recommend Protestant Bibles because they are not complete, and they lack the explanatory annotations and footnotes that explain the Catholic understanding of many obscure passages in Holy Scripture.

SACRED TRADITION

17. What is meant by Sacred Tradition?

Sacred Tradition is God's revelation that originated from Jesus Christ and the Apostles, but which has not been committed into writing *by way of divine inspiration*, and which, through the centuries, has come down to us without alteration by word of mouth through the constant teaching and practice of the Church.

18. If Sacred Tradition refers to divinely revealed truths that have not been committed into writing, then how do we discover them?

It is not that Sacred Tradition refers to divine revelation that was never committed into writing, but to revealed truths that were not committed into writing *by way of divine inspiration*. Actually, many of the truths of Sacred Tradition, and what the early Church believed, are also recorded and preserved in the Church's conciliar decrees, the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the Acts of the martyrs, and even in the prayers and liturgy of the early Church. But none of these writings were made under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They are valuable because they preserve what the Church received from Christ and the Apostles, but they are not "inspired" writings.

19. How do we know which writings are inspired by the Holy Spirit?

We only know which writings are "inspired" through the Church. The Catholic Church is divinely instituted to lead all men to salvation. Therefore, she alone can infallibly make a determination about which books should be regarded as "inspired" and which are not. In the *Council of Trent*, A.D. 1546, the Church officially defined the list of inspired books that comprise the whole Bible. That list of books, which is reproduced in the table above, is called the *canon* of Holy Scripture. (CCC 120)

20. Is Sacred Tradition infallible?

Yes, Sacred Tradition is infallible because it contains the revealed word of God. But one must be careful not to equate Sacred Tradition with the various *records* or *monuments* of Sacred Tradition, such as the writings of the Fathers of the Church, and others. Sacred Tradition itself is infallible, but the human records of Sacred Tradition made by the Fathers and other early Christians are not.

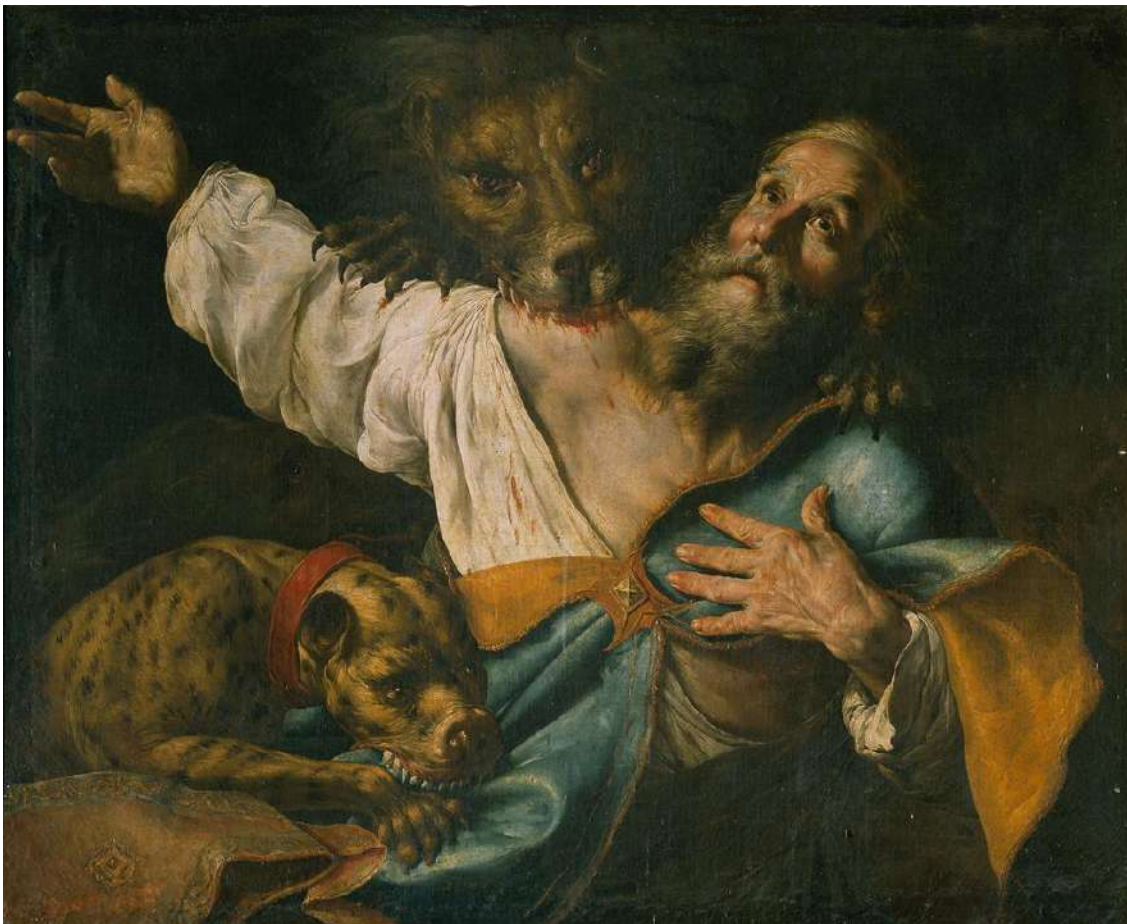


Fig 1.0.2 St. Ignatius of Antioch

One of the Fathers of the Church, St. Ignatius (A.D. 35-117) lived during the time of the Apostles and became the third bishop of Antioch (in Syria). In his writings he declared the reality of Christ as true God and true man, and affirmed his belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. During the cruel Roman persecutions his body was devoured by the lions at the Roman Amphitheatre because he chose to die rather than renounce his faith.

21. If the writings of the Fathers and other records of Sacred Tradition are neither inspired nor infallible, then what good are they?

Although these writings are neither inspired nor infallible, they are valuable because from them we also learn what the early Church received from the Apostles. For example, when there is a morally unanimous agreement among the Fathers of the Church on the status of a proposition as divinely revealed, then we can be sure that the truth of the proposition was part of Sacred Tradition (criterion of unanimity). And it is not necessary that all Fathers express their agreement either. If some of the Fathers at different times and in different places express their agreement *without opposition from the others*, then there exists a morally unanimous agreement. Let us not forget that we also have a divinely appointed Teaching Authority, the Church, who determines which statements from the Fathers are divinely revealed and, therefore, authentically part of Sacred Tradition.



Fig 1.0.3 Madonna and Child in a Catacomb Art

The records of Sacred Tradition are not limited to the writings of the Fathers of the Church. For example, one of the earliest monuments to the ancient Catholic veneration of Mary may be found in the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome. The image above, estimated to be about 1500 years old, shows the Virgin Mary nursing the Child Jesus.

22. What importance must we attach to Sacred Tradition?

We must attach to Sacred Tradition the same importance as we attach to the Holy Scripture because both are infallible sources of Divine revelation (CCC 82). We ought to be thankful that, in addition to Holy Scripture, we also have Sacred Tradition. For, there are many revealed truths that are not fully recorded in Holy Scripture, and we learn them mainly from Sacred Tradition.

23. What are some examples of divinely revealed truths that are not fully stated in Holy Scripture, but which we learn from Sacred Tradition?

Some examples of divinely revealed truths from Sacred Tradition are the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, the dogma of the Assumption of Mary, the privilege of her Immaculate Conception, the infallibility of the popes, the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, and even the canon of Holy Scripture itself. For it is only from Sacred Tradition that we come to know which of the many competing books that had been written are inspired, and which are not. Also, it is from Sacred Tradition that we learn many of our Catholic practices, such as the practice of Infant Baptism, of observing the Sabbath on Sunday, of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, of confessing our sins to a priest, of praying for the dead, etc. Many of these beliefs and practices are only briefly hinted at in Holy Scripture, but it is on account of Sacred Tradition that we practiced them through the ages and continue to practice them to this day.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

24. What is the Apostles' Creed?

It is a summary of the truths of faith handed down to us by the Apostles. The Apostles' Creed is the one that will be discussed in this catechism. A similar creed, known as the *Nicene Creed*, is the one we recite at Mass. (CCC 194-196)

25. What are the Apostles?

They were friends of our Lord Jesus Christ whom He trained to teach us our Faith. There were twelve of them (Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16). Their names are:

1. St. Simon Peter
2. St. Andrew
3. St. James the Greater, son of Zebedee
4. St. John the Evangelist, son of Zebedee
5. St. Philip
6. St. Bartholomew
7. St. Thomas the doubter
8. St. Matthew the tax collector
9. St. James the Less, son of Alphaeus
10. St. Jude Thaddeus, son of Alphaeus
11. St. Simon the Cananaean
12. Judas Iscariot the traitor, who was replaced by St. Matthias (Acts 1:21-26)

St. Peter and St. Andrew were brothers.

St. James the Less and St. Jude Thaddeus were brothers, too, and were first cousins of our Lord Jesus Christ.

26. How many articles of faith are there in the Apostles' Creed?

There are twelve articles of faith in the Creed. There is an ancient belief that the Creed was composed by the Apostles themselves, which is why it is called "The Apostles' Creed."



Fig 1.0.4 Statues of the Twelve Apostles
The statues are made by *Demetz Art Studio*

The Apostles from left to right:

- First Row – St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Matthew, St. Jude Thaddeus
- Second Row – St. Andrew, St. Bartholomew, St. John the Evangelist, St. Simon Zelotes
- Third Row – St. James the Less, St. James the Greater, St. Philip, St. Thomas the Doubter

Note: St. Paul was not one of the original Twelve Apostles. He is shown in this picture because he played a major role in the growth of the early Church, and is known as the “Apostle of the Gentiles.” Judas Iscariot, who was one of the original Twelve, is not shown because he betrayed our Lord. He was later replaced by St. Matthias (who is not shown in the picture either).

27. Recite the Apostles' Creed.

1. *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven¹ and earth.*
2. *And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.*
3. *Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.*
4. *Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.*
5. *He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead.*
6. *He ascended into Heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.*
7. *From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.*
8. *I believe in the Holy Spirit.*
9. *The Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints;*
10. *The forgiveness of sins;*
11. *The resurrection of the body; and*
12. *Life everlasting. Amen.*

¹ In this catechism I capitalize the word “Heaven” when referring to the place where God dwells, and where the angels and saints enjoy His presence in supreme bliss and happiness. I use the word “heaven” (in lower case) when referring to what is sometimes called the “heavens,” the place up in the sky where the stars and heavenly bodies exist, and which is really part of our material world. Thus, when I say that Christ ascended into Heaven, I do not mean that He went into outer space, but that He ascended to be with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in the joyful company of the angels and saints. This Heaven is really an invisible world of spirits, distinct from our material universe. I only call it a “place” for lack of a better term, but it is not a material place because spirits, unlike matter, do not occupy space. The invisible world of God and the angels is not in outer space. It is not in space at all.

ARTICLE 1: “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth.”

1. What does the first article of the Creed teach us?

The first article of the Creed teaches us that there is one and only one God; that He is all-powerful, and that He created Heaven and earth and everything else, that is to say, the whole Universe.

2. How do we know that there is a God?

When you see footprints on the sand, don't you know that someone passed there? Well, the world is full of God's footprints in the marvelous things that He has made. Just look at how butterflies are formed, for example.

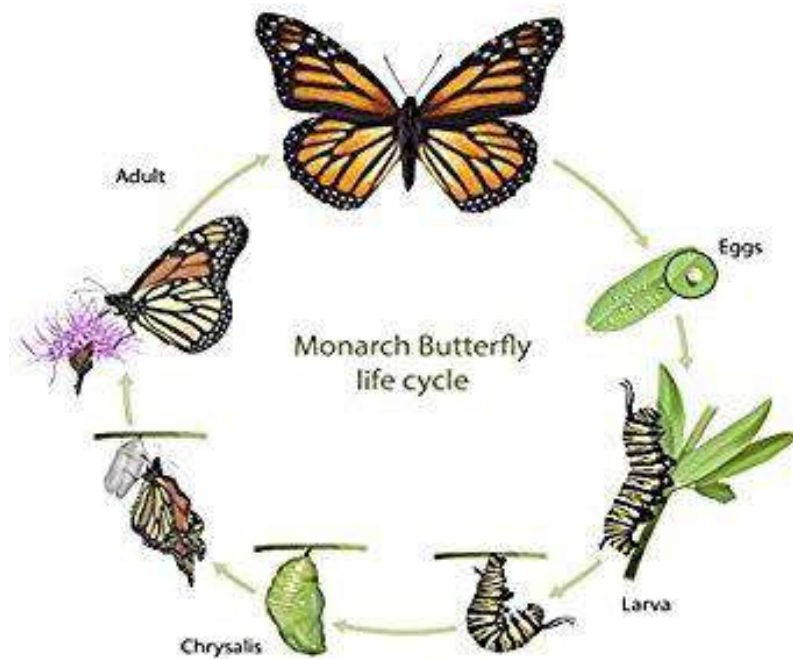


Fig 1.1.1 Metamorphosis of a Butterfly

They start out as eggs. Then they become caterpillars. After a few days they envelop themselves into a chrysalis (or cocoon) made from their own bodies. Then they come out with a head, thorax and abdomen, with a pair of sensitive antennae, compound eyes, six

jointed legs and beautifully decorated wings and ready to fly. When something amazing like this happens, do you think it all happens by chance? Or is there Someone Powerful and Intelligent behind these transformations? This is just one example among hundreds of other examples that we find in the world. Our heart tells us that there is Someone Powerful and Intelligent behind all these, although He is unseen by the human eye. That Unseen, Powerful and Intelligent Being is GOD! (CCC 31-35)

3. Why do we call God Father?

We call God Father because He created us, and because by nature He is the Father of God the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, and by grace our Father, too, on account of which we are called adopted sons of God. (CCC 238-240)

4. What is the Blessed Trinity?

The Blessed Trinity is the truth that in one God there are three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

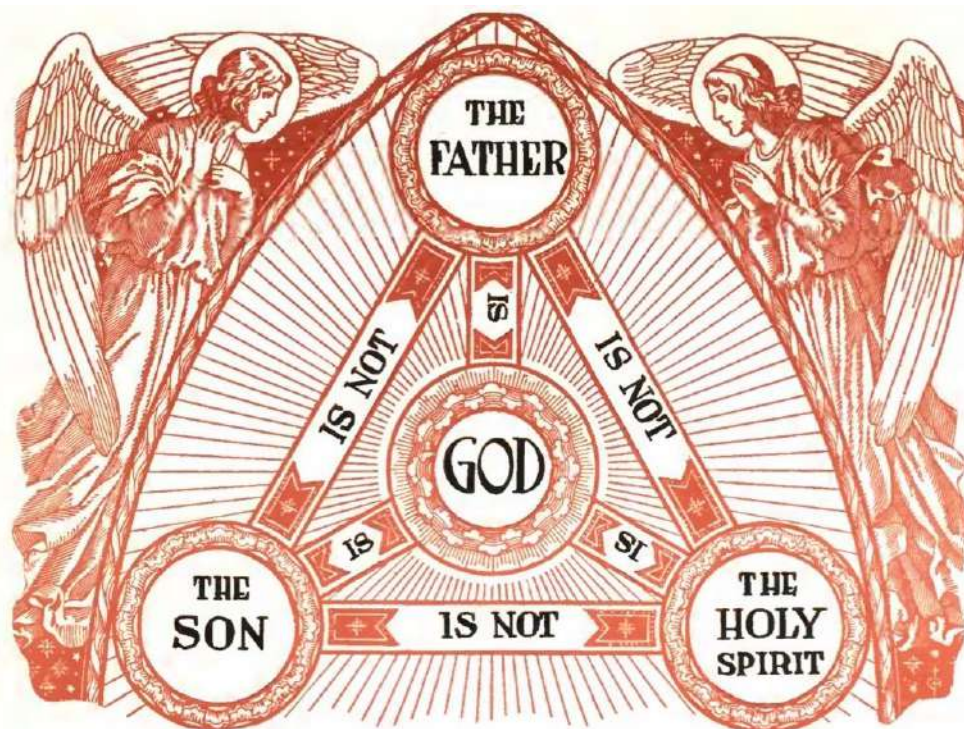


Fig 1.1.2 The Blessed Trinity

The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Each one of the Divine Persons is God, yet there are not three but only ONE God. This is a profound truth of our Faith, which is why it is called a *mystery* – the **Mystery of the Blessed Trinity**. (CCC 253-256)

5. Why is the Father the First Person of the Blessed Trinity?

The Father is the First Person of the Blessed Trinity because He does not proceed from any other Person, but is the principle of the other two Persons, that is, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

6. In the Creed we say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty.” What does “Almighty” mean?

The word “almighty” means all-powerful. God can make all things because His power is *infinite*, that is, without limit. (CCC 268-269)

7. Does God have other perfections besides being all-powerful?

Yes, because He is most perfect and, like His power, all His perfections are infinite. God is:

ALL-KNOWING = He sees and knows everything without limit;

ALL-PRESENT = He is everywhere;

ETERNAL = He always was, always is, and always will be;

UNCHANGABLE = He cannot change; He is always what He is;

ALL-GOOD = He seeks the good and does not sin;

ALL-KIND = He cares for us;

ALL-MERCIFUL = He is always ready to forgive;

ALL JUST = He rewards the good and punishes the evil.

8. Why do we not see God?

We do not see God because He is a spirit and has no body. And because He has no body, God cannot decompose into various parts and will never die.

9. If God cannot sin nor die, why do we say He can do all things?

Though He can neither sin nor die, we say God can do all things because to be able to sin or to die is not an effect of power, but of weakness which cannot exist in God who is most perfect.

10. In the Creed we also say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth.” What does it mean to create?

To create means to make something *out of nothing*. Artists and builders also make things, but they need materials to make them. But God can make things, even the materials that He needs, out of nothing. That is how He made heaven and earth and all things contained therein, that is, the whole Universe. He made them all out of nothing. (CCC 296, 325-327)

11. Was the world created by the Father alone?

The world was created by all the three Divine Persons, because whatever one Person does with regard to creatures is also done by the other two Persons in one and the selfsame act.

12. Why then is creation especially attributed to the Father?

Creation is especially attributed to the Father because creation is the work of Divine Power. Just as wisdom is attributed to the Son and goodness to the Holy Spirit, power is attributed to the Father, although all three Persons possess the same wisdom, goodness and power. (CCC 258)



Fig 1.1.3 God the Father and Creator of the World

Questions for discussion:

1. If God is a spirit, why did the artist depict God the Father with a head, arms and body?
2. What suggests that this is a painting of the Father and not of the Son or of the Holy Spirit?

13. Does God take any interest in the world He created? And does He care about us?

Of course He cares about the world and us. When you make something, then it belongs to you. And because it belongs to you, you care for it. God takes care of the world and us because He created us, and we belong to Him. He therefore preserves us, and governs us by His infinite goodness and wisdom. Nothing happens in the world that He does not either will or permit. (CCC 270)

14. If God cares about us, then why does He let bad things happen in the world?

God has His reasons. Note that there are two kinds of bad things that happen in the world: **physical evil** (such as sickness, death, earthquakes, etc.) and **moral evil** or **sin** (such as murder, war, etc.) God does NOT directly will either one of these evils. However:

- a) He *permits* sin because it is the price of human freedom. If men cannot sin, then how can they be free? Since God chose to have creatures endowed with freedom (free will), He permits, although He does not will, that they commit sin.
- b) Physical evils are different. God wills them *indirectly* on account of the good that results from them. For example, God wills persecution and suffering because without them we will not have heroes and martyrs. Without hardship, we will not learn self-control and diligence. Without poverty, we cannot practice benevolence and charity. So, God indirectly wills these physical evils on account of the good that derives from them.
- c) Many of those that we call physical evil are results of natural processes and are often useful in themselves. For example, although pain causes suffering, it serves as a warning signal for a person to discover a hidden illness that otherwise would remain undetected. Also, many physical evils (such as poverty, hardship, sickness, etc.) are actually man-made and not due to God. God wills them indirectly, so as to teach us a lesson and to call us back to Himself (CCC 309-314).

THE ANGELS



Fig 1.1.4 Angels Singing Praises to God

15. Which are the noblest of God's creatures?

The noblest creatures created by God are the angels. The angels are intelligent and purely spiritual creatures. (CCC 330) They really have no wings nor material figure because they have no bodies. Artists draw them with wings and human form only to help our imagination. The wings remind us that they are God's messengers.

16. Why did God create the angels?

God created the angels so as to be honored and served by them, and also to be happy with Him forever in Heaven. They sing praises to God unceasingly. (CCC 331-333)

17. Were all the angels faithful to God?

No, not all the angels remained faithful to God. Many of them became so proud of their power, their intelligence and their beauty, that they refused to serve God. As a result, they were expelled from Heaven by St. Michael the Archangel, and were condemned to suffer forever in hell. (CCC 391-395)



Fig 1.1.5 St. Michael the Archangel

18. What are the angels called who were expelled from Heaven?

The angels banished from Heaven are called fallen angels, demons or devils, and their chief is called Satan (Rev 12:9).

19. Are demons real, and can they harm us?

Oh, they are as real as the noon-day sun! Unfortunately, there are many people today who don't believe that demons and hell actually exist. And the demons love it! They know that they can do people more harm the less people are on guard against them. Demons harm us by tempting us to sin. Don't think they aren't around just because you don't see them. They use the radio, the TV, the Internet, the video games and all your favorite devices to bring evil thoughts into your heart. Keeping you away from prayer and from God is their specialty! And they are very crafty, too. Don't think for a moment that they will appear to you as ugly, horrible-looking creatures, which they are. No, they will appear to you as enjoyable and fun creatures, so you will not suspect that they are demons in disguise. They will appear to you in the form of fun games, fun shows, fun companions, so that you will be enticed to neglect your duties, your studies, your prayers and God. They are so crafty. That's how Satan tempted our first parents, Adam and Eve. He appeared as a harmless serpent and lied to them. That is why he is called "the father of liars" (John 8:44).

20. Why do demons tempt us?

The demons tempt us because they envy us. They desire our eternal damnation because of their hatred of God whose image is reflected in us. However, God allows them to tempt us so that we may overcome them by His grace and show our loyalty to Him.

21. What do you call the angels who remained faithful to God?

The angels who remained faithful to God are called the good angels, heavenly spirits, or simply angels.

22. How many angels are there?

The angels in Heaven are innumerable. The prophet Daniel said, “Thousands of thousands ministered to Him (God), and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him” (Dan 7:10).

23. Are all angels equal in dignity?

No, they differ in power, wisdom and dignity according to their rank or office. There are nine ranks or “choirs” of angels mentioned in the Bible. These are:

Seraphim (Isa 6:1-7)

Cherubim (Gen 3:24)

Thrones (Col 1:16)

Dominations or Dominions (Eph 1:21; Col 1:16)

Virtues (Eph 1:21)

Powers (Eph 1:21; 3:10; Col 1:16; 2:15)

Principalities (Rom 8:38; Eph 1:21; 3:10; Col 1:16; 2:15)

Archangels (1 Thes 4:15)

Angels (Gen 19; Tob 12:15; Matt 1:20; Rev 2:1-3:14).

Among those who rebelled against God were the *principalities* and *powers* who are also now on earth to tempt us (Eph 6:12).

24. Do angels have names?

We know three angels by name because they are mentioned in Holy Scripture. They are St. Michael, St. Gabriel, and St. Raphael. Only St. Michael was called an archangel (Jude 1:9), but of course, St. Raphael and St. Gabriel could be archangels, too.

- a) **St. Michael the Archangel** – was the one who led the good angels in the fight against Satan (Rev 12:7-9). He was also described as “the great prince, who stands for the children of thy people (Israel)” (Dan 12:1).



Fig 1.1.6 St. Raphael with Bishop Domonte

The name “Raphael” means “one who heals.” For this reason St. Raphael is often associated with the angel in St. John’s Gospel who stirs the pool of Bethesda to heal the sick (John 5:4). The painting above was made by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682).

- b) **St. Gabriel** – was the one who appeared to Zachary to announce the birth of St. John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-19), and who announced to the Virgin Mary that she was going to be the Mother of God (Luke 1:26-38).
- c) **St. Raphael** – appeared in the book of Tobit and said: “I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord” (Tob 12:15).

25. How powerful are the angels?

They are very powerful. In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah spoke of one angel single-handedly destroying an Assyrian army of 185,000 men (Isa 37:36).

26. What became of the angels who remained faithful to God?

The angels who remained faithful to God stayed in Heaven to enjoy the vision of God forever, and to love, bless and praise Him without end.

27. Is praising God all that the good angels do?

Some of them also act as God’s ministers and messengers, while others act as our *guardian angels*. The belief that every human being has a personal guardian angel especially assigned by God to watch over him “from infancy to death” is not merely a pious or popular Catholic belief. It is official Catholic teaching. (CCC 336)

28. Do individuals alone have a guardian angel?

Many people think that guardian angels protect individual souls only. Yet we know from St. John the Evangelist that each church or community of believers also has its own guardian angel (Rev 1:20). It is not impossible that angels are assigned to watch, not just churches, but entire cities and nations.



Fig 1.1.7 Guardian Angel Protecting a Child from the Demon

Most pictures of guardian angels show them protecting children from physical harm. The above picture shows the guardian angel protecting a child from the devil, which is what the guardian angel mostly does. Our guardian angel watches us “from infancy to death” (CCC 336). We should therefore be particularly devoted to our guardian angel, honoring him, invoking his aid, following his inspirations throughout our life.

MAN

29. Which is the noblest creature God has placed on earth?

The noblest creature God has placed on earth is man.

30. What is man?

Man is a rational creature composed of body and soul.

31. What is the soul?

The soul is the noblest part of man, because it is a spiritual substance, endowed with intelligence and will, capable of knowing God and of possessing Him forever.

32. Can the human soul be seen and touched?

The soul can neither be seen nor touched, because it is a spirit.

33. Will the human soul die when the body dies?

The human soul never dies, because a spirit has no parts that can decompose. A spirit is, therefore, indivisible and immortal.

34. Is man free in his actions?

Yes, man is free in his actions. Each one feels within himself that he can do a thing or leave it undone, or do one thing rather than another.

35. Explain human freedom by an example.

If I voluntarily tell a lie, I know that I could have left it unsaid or remained silent, or I could also speak differently and tell the truth.

36. Why do we say that man was created to the image and likeness of God?

We say that man was created to the image and likeness of God because the human soul is spiritual and rational, free in its operations, and capable of knowing and loving Him forever. These perfections reflect the image of God in us. (CCC 1705)

37. In what state did God place our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise?

God placed our first parents, Adam and Eve, originally in the state of innocence and grace. In fact, sanctifying grace was the chief gift that God gave our first parents, for it made them friends of God and gave them the right to Heaven. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve lost this grace when they committed sin.

38. What do you call the original state of Adam and Eve before they fell to sin?

The state of Adam and Eve before the Fall is called “the state of original justice.” This state was characterized by a triple harmony. In the state of original justice Adam and Eve were in *harmony with God*; they were in *harmony with themselves*; and they were in *harmony with the rest of creation*. (CCC 374)

- a.) Adam and Eve were in harmony with God because they enjoyed God’s friendship, and God provided them with everything they needed. Since they were created *as adults*, God gave them the gift of **knowledge**. By this gift they didn’t have to learn how to walk, to speak, or to manage their lives, because God already gave them these skills and abilities at the moment of creation.
- b.) Adam and Eve were also in harmony with themselves, not only by being at peace with each other, but internally or within themselves, because their passion was perfectly subject to reason. This is called the gift of **integrity**. By this gift Adam and Eve suffered no evil inclination, because their passion and sensible desires were in perfect accord with the rule of reason.
- c.) Adam and Eve were also in harmony with the rest of creation. This means that they were not only at peace with all the animals, but also with all the elements and forces of nature. By their gifts of **immunity** and **immortality**, Adam and Eve were created free from all sickness, pain and sorrow, and even death.

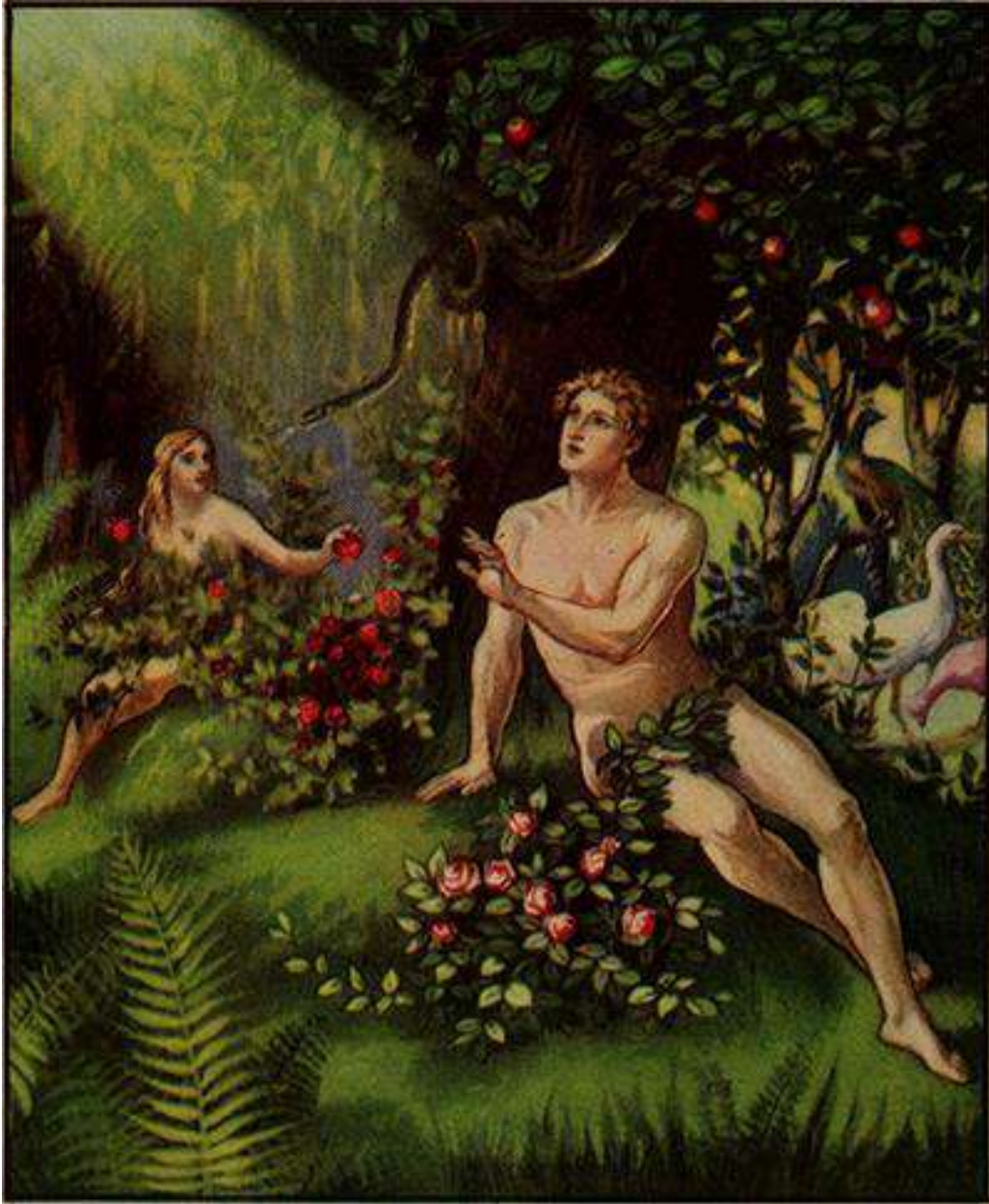


Fig 1.1.8 Adam and Eve in Paradise

39. How did Adam and Eve commit the first sin?

God told them not to eat the fruit of a certain tree that grew in the Garden of Eden (or Paradise). But the devil appeared to them in the form of a serpent, and told them that if they were to eat the fruit, they would also become all-knowing and all powerful like God. That was a lie. But Adam and Eve believed it, and they disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit.

40. What was the nature of Adam's sin?

Adam's sin was a sin of pride and grave disobedience.

41. What happened to Adam and Eve on account of their sin?

They lost the *grace* of God and the right they had to the Kingdom of Heaven. They were driven out of Paradise and lost the triple harmony that existed in their state of original justice. For, not only did they break their friendship with God, but they also lost the internal harmony within themselves and their harmony with the rest of creation. In Paradise Adam and Eve didn't have to work because God, their Friend, provided them with everything they needed. But outside of Paradise, they had to work to sustain themselves. And without the special gifts of knowledge, integrity, immunity and immortality, they had to learn everything, including how to harness the forces of nature and how to tame the animals that once were subject to them. They also became subject to all sorts of misery and illnesses, and condemned to death.

42. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, would they have been exempt from death?

Yes. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, and if they had remained faithful to God, then, after a happy and peaceful sojourn here on earth, and without dying, they and their descendants would have been transferred by God into Heaven to enjoy a life of unending happiness with Him.

43. Did Adam and Eve deserve the special gifts originally given to them?

No, those gifts were absolutely free from God. They are called "preternatural gifts" because they were *over and beyond what Adam and Eve would have naturally received*, had not God given them a very special love. Thus, one could not justly blame God for taking those gifts away from them after the Fall.

44. Does this sin belong to Adam and Eve alone?

This sin is not the sin of Adam and Eve alone, but is also our sin, though in a different sense. In Adam and Eve it was an **actual sin** because they committed it by an act of their will. In us it is not an actual sin but is called **original sin** because we acquire it, not by actually committing it, but just because we *originated* from Adam and Eve who actually committed it.

45. How can original sin be transmitted to all humans?

When parents lose their home to fire because of their carelessness, don't the children also lose their home? Of course, they do. When Adam and Eve lost their special gifts and privileges because of their sin, we, their descendants, also lost the same gifts and privileges. This loss is an inherited loss and punishment. And that is what original sin is. It is the sin and punishment of all human beings, which they inherited from Adam and Eve by having originated from them. Every descendant of Adam and Eve is born without the right to enter Heaven, and without the gifts of integrity, immortality, immunity and knowledge.

46. Are all humans born with original sin?

Yes, except the Blessed Virgin Mary and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since the Virgin Mary was destined to be the Mother of God, she was preserved from original sin by a singular privilege of Almighty God, who applied the future merits of Jesus Christ to her when she was conceived. This special privilege is called the *privilege of her Immaculate Conception*.

It is by her Immaculate Conception that Mary would crush the head of the serpent (representing Satan), a prophecy given when God drove Adam and Eve out of Paradise. God told the serpent: "I will put enmities between you and the woman (Eve), and your seed and her seed (Mary): **she shall crush your head**, and you shall lie in wait for her heel" (Gen 3:15).



Fig 1.1.9 Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception

Did you notice what our Lady is stepping on? Can you explain what it means?

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47. Is Mary's Immaculate Conception an article of faith?

Yes, it is an article of our faith, although it is not one of the twelve articles of the Apostle's Creed. It is one of the teachings of the Church that we learned from Sacred Tradition. Although this teaching was disputed at one time, the Apostles and the early Church felt that it would be an embarrassment to the Son of God to have a sinful mother. So, on December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX ended all discussions by defining the Immaculate Conception of Mary as an infallible dogma that must be believed and accepted by all. (CCC 491)

48. Why did Jesus Christ not contract original sin?

Our Lord was not born with original sin because He did not originate from Adam, since He did not have a human father. Instead, He received the holiness of God the Father, His true Father in Heaven. Of course, Jesus Christ also received His human nature from His mother (Mary) who is a descendant of Adam. But because of the privilege of her Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Mary was born without original sin. Therefore, Jesus Christ did not inherit original sin through her either.

49. If everyone, except the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, is born with original sin, how could humanity be saved?

No one would be saved, if God did not show mercy toward them.

50. What was the mercy shown by God to the human race?

When He drove them out of Paradise, God promised Adam and Eve that He would send them a Redeemer or Savior, who would regain for them and their descendants the gift of *grace* and the right to the Kingdom of Heaven. The Redeemer would also free them from the slavery of sin² and of the devil.

² The "slavery of sin" refers to our tendency to sin, or to our weakness to control our passions and evil inclinations which, *as a result of sin*, often prompt us to avoid what is good and to do acts that we know to be sinful. St. Paul describes it thus: "For I do not that good which I will: but the evil which I hate, that I do" (Rom 7:15).

51. Who is the promised Redeemer or Savior of the world?

The promised Redeemer or Savior is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, who took a human nature without losing His divinity. As man, He took the name of Jesus Christ. By becoming man, God the Son was able to pay for the sin of man by obeying God the Father even though it led to His suffering and death.

52. When did God the Son become human?

He became man over 2000 years ago in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He was born in a stable at Bethlehem on Christmas day. That was the first Christmas. Shepherds came to visit Him. Then, a few days after His birth, three wise men (or “the three kings”) came from the East to visit Him, showing that He was the Lord of the ignorant as well as of the learned, the Lord of the poor and of the rich alike.

ARTICLE 2: *“And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.”*

1. What does the second article of the Creed teach us?

The second article of the Creed teaches us that the Son of God is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; that, like the Father, He is God eternal, almighty, Creator and Lord; that He became man to save us; and that the Son of God, made man, is called Jesus Christ.

2. Why is the Second Person called the Son?

The Second Person is called the Son because He is begotten by the Father from all eternity by way of intelligence. For this reason He is also called the Eternal Word of the Father.³

3. Since we are also sons of God, why is Jesus Christ called the only Son of God the Father?

Jesus Christ is called the only Son of God the Father, because He alone is His Son by nature, whereas we are His sons by adoption.

4. Why is the Son of God, made man, called Jesus Christ?

The name “Jesus” means Savior or “God saves.” The Son of God, made man, is called Jesus because He came to save us from the punishments due to our sins. When the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary that she was chosen to be the Mother of God, he also told her that the Baby that would be born of her was to be named Jesus (Luke 1:31). And He is also called “Christ,” which means consecrated or anointed, because He has been anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power. (CCC 430, 436)

³ In us the *word* is the verbal representation of our ideas or mental images, and these ideas and images proceed from our minds. In God the Word also represents the Image which proceeds from the Father’s eternal Act of knowing Himself. By Knowing Himself, the Father forms an Image of Himself. This “Image of the Father,” this Eternal Word, is God the Son. (CCC 241)



Fig 1.2.1 The Annunciation

5. Why is Jesus Christ called our Lord?

Jesus Christ is called our Lord, because this title indicates His sovereignty, supreme power and authority over us. To call Jesus “Lord” is to believe in His divinity. (CCC 449, 455)

6. Did people have any knowledge about our Lord Jesus Christ before He was born?

Yes, prior to His birth people were already expecting that a Savior was coming because it was promised by God to our first parents, Adam and Eve. There were many prophecies that foretold the coming of the Redeemer.

7. What did the prophecies foretell of the Redeemer?

Regarding the Redeemer, the prophecies foretold whose family He was to come from; the place and time of His birth; His miracles; the circumstances of His passion and death; His Resurrection and even His Ascension into Heaven. Actually, that was how the three wise men (or the three kings) knew when and where Christ was to be born. They learned it from the prophecies written in ancient scrolls and manuscripts. They went to Judea looking for Him.

8. How do we know that Jesus Christ is really the promised Savior and Redeemer of the world?

We know that Jesus Christ is truly the promised Savior and Redeemer of the world because in Him all the prophecies about the Savior were fulfilled.

9. How do we know that Jesus Christ is true man?

We know that Jesus Christ is true man because He was born of a human mother, the Virgin Mary. He has a body and soul like ours. He has our human nature. As true man, Christ was born just like us. He grew up, He worked, He ate, He slept, and did everything that normal human beings do. However, St. Thomas Aquinas suggested that Christ never got sick, nor suffer any abnormality, nor commit sin. He had no physical sickness, deformity, or sin because He was a perfect human. He could feel pain and suffer injury because a normal body would feel pain when wounded. He could get hungry and thirsty because these are normal for any human body. He had everything that a normal human body has. But sin, sickness, physical and psychological abnormalities are not normal for a human being. So, St. Thomas thought that Christ, being a perfect human being, did not have those.

10. How do we know that Jesus Christ is true God?

We know that Jesus Christ is true God because (1) God the Father said of Him, “This is My beloved Son...” first, when Christ was baptized by St. John the Baptist (Matt 3:17), and second, during

the Transfiguration (Matt 17:5); (2) The angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary that her Baby would be the Son of God (Luke 1:35); (3) Christ Himself said that He is true God (Mark 14:61-62), and He confirmed it by performing marvelous miracles.

11. What miracles did Jesus Christ perform that shows His divinity?

Besides the fact that He rose from the dead, the chief miracles performed by Jesus Christ are restoring health to the sick, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf mute, and life to the dead. In one instance He also walked on water, calmed the storm, changed water into wine, and multiplied bread and fish to feed 5000 men, not counting women and children (Matt 14:21).

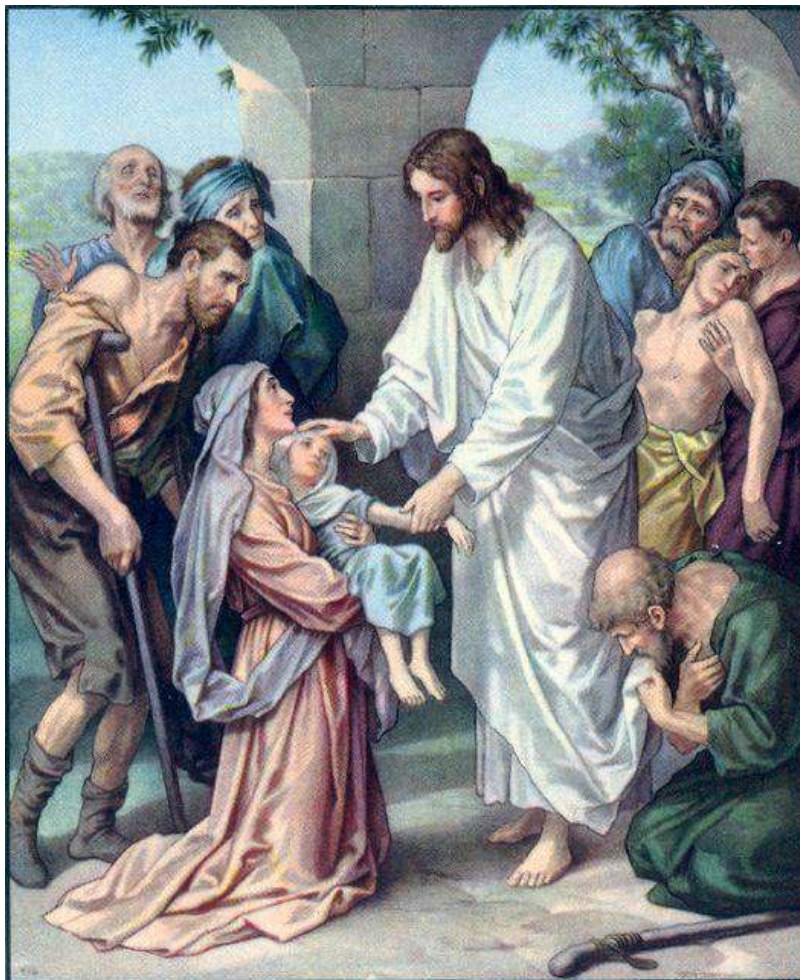


Fig 1.2.2 Christ Healing the Sick

ARTICLE 3: *“Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.”*

1. What does the third article of the Creed teach us?

The third article of the Creed teaches that by the operation of the Holy Spirit the Son of God took a body and soul like ours, in the chaste womb of the Virgin Mary, and that He was born of that Virgin.

2. Did the Father and the Son also take part in forming the body and creating the soul of Jesus Christ?

Yes, all three Divine Persons cooperated in forming the body and in creating the soul of Jesus Christ.

3. Why then is it simply said that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and not also by the Father and the Son?

It is simply said that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit because the Incarnation of the Son of God is a work of goodness and love. Works of goodness and love are attributed to the Holy Spirit in the same manner as works of divine power are attributed to the Father, although all three Divine Persons also cooperate in works of divine omnipotence, such as in the creation of the world.

4. Did God the Son cease to be God when He became human?

No, He remained **true God** and **true man**, a God-man. It is difficult to understand how God can be man at the same time. This is another profound truth of our faith, which is why it is called a “mystery,” – the **Mystery of the Incarnation**. (CCC 464-469)

5. Are there, then, two natures in Jesus Christ, one human and one divine?

Yes, in Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, there are two natures, the divine and the human. He is perfect God and perfect man, a true God-man. There is no one else like Him. He is the only Person who is true God and at the same time true man. (CCC 481)

6. In Jesus Christ are there also two persons, the divine and the human?

No, Christ is only ONE Person, although He has two natures. As a Person, He is Divine and is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Jesus Christ, the true God, is the same Divine Person as Jesus Christ, the true man. Therefore, there is only one Person, called Jesus Christ, and He is not a human but a Divine Person.

7. Was Jesus Christ always man?

No, Jesus Christ became human only 2000 years ago when He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary.



Fig 1.3.1 Mary adoring the Baby Jesus

8. Was Jesus Christ always God?

Yes, Jesus Christ was always God. Because, as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, He is equal to the Father in being and divinity. So, if the Father was always God, so was Jesus Christ.

9. How many wills are there in Jesus Christ?

In Jesus Christ there are two wills, one human, the other divine.

10. Did Jesus Christ possess a free will?

Yes, Jesus Christ also possessed a free will, but, as a perfect man, He would not choose evil because to choose evil is a defect of freedom, an imperfection rather than a perfection.

11. Are the Son of God and the Son of Mary one and the same Person?

Yes, the Son of God and the Son of Mary are one and the same Person, that is, Jesus Christ, true God and true man.

12. Is the Blessed Virgin the Mother of God?

Yes, because Jesus Christ is God, and Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Mary is the Mother of God. (CCC 509)

13. How did Mary become the Mother of Jesus Christ?

Mary conceived and became the Mother of Jesus Christ solely through the power of the Holy Spirit, and without the need of any man. Thus, Jesus Christ did not have a human father, but He had a foster-father or guardian whose name was St. Joseph, the man whom the Virgin Mary was married to.

14. Is it part of our faith that Mary was always a virgin?

Yes, it is part of our faith as Catholics that Mary was always a Virgin, *before, during, and after* the birth of Jesus Christ. She remained a virgin when she conceived Jesus Christ because she conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not by man. She is, therefore, truly the Virgin of virgins. (CCC 510)

15. What became of her when our Lord left the earth?

She followed St. John the Apostle to whose care she had been entrusted by her Divine Son (John 19:25-27).

16. Where did she die?

Nobody knows. And nobody knows if she died at all. All that we know is that at the end of her sojourn here on earth, she was lifted up body and soul into Heaven. (CCC 966)

There are some who believe that because death is a penalty for sin, and Mary was sinless, therefore Mary did not die but was lifted up straight to Heaven when the time came for her to be reunited with her Son.

Others believe that since Mary was the companion of Jesus in sorrow, then if Jesus Himself died, then Mary also would have died, not as a penalty for sin, but in order to make her compassionate suffering with her Son more complete. Those who believe that Mary died also believe that after three days, Mary was raised from the dead and was lifted up into Heaven.

Note the difference between the Virgin Mary and our Lord Jesus. Because Jesus Christ is God, He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven *by His own power*.⁴ On the other hand, because Mary is only human, she needed to be raised from the dead (if she died) and lifted up into Heaven *by the power of God*. This is the reason why we say that Jesus Christ *ascended* into Heaven by Himself, while the Virgin Mary *was assumed* into Heaven by God. We celebrate Christ's **Ascension** into Heaven by His own power, but we celebrate Mary's **Assumption** into Heaven by the power of God.

⁴ As man, of course, Christ needed His body to be raised from the dead by God. This is why we read texts like, "God raised Him up from the dead on the third day" (Acts 13:30). But, as God, Christ rose from the dead by His power, for He said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). As St. John clarified, Christ was speaking of the temple of His body (John 2:21).

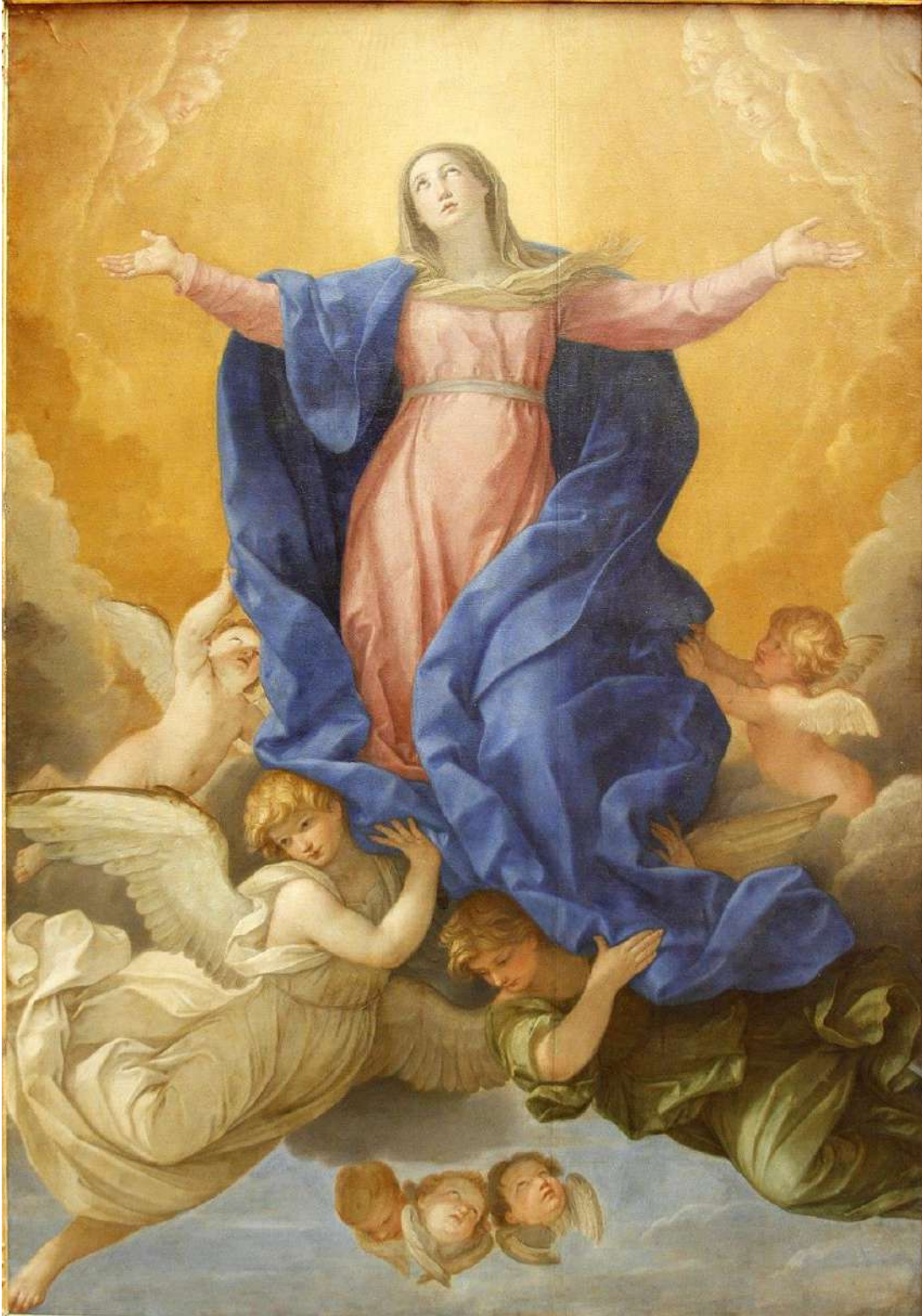


Fig 1.3.2 The Assumption of Mary

Notice how the artist shows Mary being lifted up by the angels, rather than going up into Heaven by herself.

17. Is the Assumption of Mary also an article of our faith?

Yes, it is also an article of faith. Like the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the dogma about the Assumption of Mary into Heaven is not one of the twelve articles of the Apostle's Creed, but it is a teaching that is binding on all Catholics. It was defined by Pope Pius XII as an infallible teaching on November 1, 1950. This means that one may doubt whether the Virgin Mary died or not, but one may not doubt that she was assumed into Heaven when her time came to be reunited with her Son. The dogma of the Assumption of Mary must be believed by all Catholics. Those who do not accept the dogma of the Assumption of Mary, the Immaculate Conception, or any of the articles of the Creed, are called *heretics*, and are considered excluded from the Catholic Church.

18. When was Mary assumed into Heaven?

The exact year of Mary's Assumption into Heaven is not recorded anywhere. But some of the visionaries (St. Bridget of Sweden and Blessed Catherine Emmerich) said that the Virgin Mary stayed on earth for 15 or 16 more years after the Ascension of Jesus Christ. Another visionary, the Venerable Mary of Agreda, said that the Virgin Mary was about 70 years old when she was lifted up into Heaven. However, these are approximate estimates, not dogma.

19. What happened when the Virgin Mary entered Heaven?

It is the pious belief of many Catholics that upon her arrival in Heaven, the Virgin Mary was crowned **Queen of Heaven**. This belief has not been defined as an infallible teaching, but it is a logical sequel to the dogma of the Assumption. Since Mary has been associated with Jesus Christ in the work of the redemption, it is only right that she also shares, in a subordinate way, the royal dignity of her Son. Just as Jesus Christ is regarded as our Lord and King, Mary is hailed as our Lady and Queen.



Fig 1.3.3 The Coronation of Mary

ARTICLE 4: *“Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.”*

1. What does the fourth article of the Creed teach us?

The fourth article of the Creed teaches us that to redeem the world from sin Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate (the Governor of Judea), died on the cross, and, on being taken down therefrom, was buried.

2. How did Jesus Christ redeem the world from sin?

Christ redeemed the world from sin by suffering and dying on the cross. He was first scourged, crowned with thorns, then crucified.

3. Could not the Father just forgive Adam’s sin instead of sending His Son to suffer for us?

Adam’s sin had a penalty to be paid, which was death, and Divine Justice requires that it be paid. The Father sent His Son to pay the penalty and satisfy Divine Justice.

4. Would it not have been enough for an angel to come and redeem us from sin?

No, because the offense given to God by Adam’s sin was, in a sense, infinite. The gravity of an offense is measured by the dignity of the person offended: the higher the dignity of the offended person, the more grievous is the offense. Thus, it is a more serious offense to strike a military general than to strike an ordinary soldier. Since the Person offended by Adam’s sin was God, who is Infinite in dignity and perfection, the offense that Adam caused by His sin was, in that sense, infinitely grievous. No reparation by any creature would be adequate to compensate the offense done to God’s majesty. No reparation made by even the entire world, nor by an angel, nor by the entire heavenly host, would be enough to satisfy the damage caused by man’s sin.



Fig 1.4.1 A Pendant Showing the Instruments of Christ's Passion
From the Metropolitan Museum of Art

5. Why did the Son of God Himself need to come and redeem us?

Just as the seriousness of an offense is measured by the dignity of the person offended, so the value of a reparation is measured by the dignity of the person making the reparation. The higher is the dignity of the person making the reparation, the more valuable is the reparation. If the person making the reparation is a Divine Person, the reparation will have infinite merit, and will be sufficient to satisfy an infinitely grievous offense. This is why the Son of God had to come and become human so that, by His sacrifice, a satisfactory reparation can be made for man's sin.

6. What does the word “suffered” denote?

The word “suffered” denotes all the pains endured by Christ during His passion.

7. Did Jesus Christ suffer as God or as man?

Jesus Christ suffered as man; as God He could neither suffer nor die.

8. What kind of punishment was death on the cross?

The punishment known as the *crucifixion* was in those days the cruelest and the most disgraceful of all punishments. It was the kind of punishment usually reserved only for criminals. Although Christ was innocent as a Lamb, He was punished and treated like a criminal. In fact, He was crucified together with two thieves.

9. Who was it that condemned Jesus Christ to be crucified?

He who condemned Jesus Christ to be crucified was Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Judea who, though recognizing Christ's innocence, cowardly yielded to the threats of the people of Jerusalem. The Jews told him that if he would not condemn Christ, who was reputed to be the King of kings, then he was not being loyal to Caesar, the Emperor of Rome. Pilate did not want to get in trouble with Caesar, so he handed Christ to the Jews to be crucified.

10. So, were the Jews responsible for Christ's death on the cross?

Yes, but the Jews were not solely responsible for Christ's death. Actually, we sinners are all responsible for Christ's passion and death, for if we had not sinned, Christ would not have come to suffer for us. Therefore, the Church does not lay the entire blame for the sufferings of Jesus Christ on the Jews alone, but also on Christians and all sinners. St. Francis of Assisi even said, "Nor did demons crucify him; it is you who have crucified him and crucify him still, when you delight in your vices and sins" (CCC 598).

11. Was Christ's passion and death determined solely by the free decisions of men?

No, it was also part of God's predetermined plan of salvation. For Christ came in order to redeem us from sin. God allowed and knew from eternity all the events leading to His passion and crucifixion, without violating the freedom of the people who were involved in bringing about God's plan of salvation. The Jews, King Herod, Pontius Pilate, and all those who participated in making God's plan unfold in history, were not passive players acting according to God's predestined plan, but were each actively using their free decisions in bringing about, while unbeknown to them, God's redemptive plan. (CCC 599, 600)

12. What then was the ultimate or first cause of Christ's passion and death?

The ultimate cause, or the first initiative, that brought about Christ's passion and death is God's eternal love for us. From eternity God's benevolent love, and without merit on our part, conceived the Incarnation of the Son of God, so that the damage caused by Adam's Fall – already present in His eternal vision, – could be repaired. (CCC 604)



Fig 1.4.2 Christ Crucified between Two Thieves

13. Where was Jesus Christ crucified?

Jesus Christ was crucified on Mount Calvary (Matt 27:33), a place called *Golgotha* in Hebrew (John 19:17).

14. Could not Jesus Christ have freed Himself from the hands of Pilate and the Jews?

Yes, Jesus Christ could have freed Himself from the hands of Pilate and the Jews, but knowing that it was His Father's Will that He should redeem us from sin, He voluntarily accepted the death on the cross and offered His life to the Father. (CCC 606)

15. What did Jesus Christ do while on the cross?

On the cross Jesus Christ prayed for His enemies; gave His Most Blessed Mother as a Mother to St. John, and, in his person, to all of us. Christ offered up His death in sacrifice, and satisfied the justice of God for the sins of humankind.

16. If Christ died on the cross and Christ is God, then could we say that God died on the cross?

To say "God died on the cross" is misleading because God never dies. To avoid confusion, it is better to say, "A Divine Person died on the cross," rather than simply saying, "God died on the cross." For although God, as God, never dies, the Divine Person, Jesus Christ, has a human nature that can die. (CCC 468)

17. Was it necessary for Christ to suffer as much as He did?

No, it was not absolutely necessary for Jesus Christ to suffer as much as He did, because each of His acts being of infinite value, the least of His sufferings would have sufficed for our redemption.

18. Why, then, did Jesus Christ suffer so much?

Jesus Christ suffered so much in order to satisfy divine justice all the more abundantly, to display His love for us still more, and to inspire us with the deepest horror of sin.

19. Did anything remarkable happen when Christ died?

Yes, at the death of Jesus Christ, the sun was darkened, the earth trembled, the veil of the temple was torn in half, graves opened and many of the dead arose (Matt 27:51-52).

20. Was the divinity separated from the body and soul of Jesus Christ by His death?

No. At His death the Divine Person, Jesus Christ, continued to assume His body and soul. Therefore, only the soul of Christ was separated from the body, but His body and soul *continued to exist in His Person*. This is why at His death Christ's body was not reduced into a mere cadaver, but remained sacred, divine and incorrupt. (CCC 626, 627, 630)

21. For whom did Jesus Christ die?

Jesus Christ died for all men, and made satisfaction for all. (CCC 605)

22. If Jesus Christ died for the salvation of all men, will all men be saved?

Jesus Christ died for all, but not all are saved because not all will acknowledge Him. Not all observe His Law, and not all avail themselves of the means of salvation He has left us.

23. To be saved is it enough that Jesus Christ died for us?

No, it is not enough for our salvation that Jesus Christ has died for us. It is also necessary that the fruit of His passion and death be applied to each one of us by each one receiving the sacraments and the graces earned by His passion and death, especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.

24. Where was the body of Jesus Christ buried?

The body of Jesus Christ was buried in a new grave, cut out of a rock, on the mount not far from where He was crucified.



Fig 1.4.3 The Burial of Jesus Christ

NOTE: The body of Jesus Christ was wrapped in a long linen cloth, called a shroud (Mark 15:46). After the resurrection, Jesus Christ left the tomb, but the linen cloth remained (Luke 24:12).

ARTICLE 5: “He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead.”

1. What does the fifth article of the Creed teach us?

The fifth article of the Creed teaches us that the soul of Jesus Christ, on being separated from His body, descended to the “hell of the just,” and that on the third day it became united once more to His body, never to be parted from it again.

2. What is here meant by the “hell of the just”?

There are two kinds of “hell”: the *hell of the damned* and the *hell of the just*. Before Christ redeemed us from sin, no one could enter Heaven, because it was closed for us by Adam’s sin. The souls of bad people who had died went straight to the “hell of the damned,” while the souls of good people who had died went to the “hell of the just,” where they waited until Christ accomplished our redemption by His death.

The **hell of the damned** (Greek *Gehenna*, or Hebrew *Gai Hinnom*) is where the devils and demons are punished. This is also the place where the souls of bad people go when they die with a mortal sin in their soul. The bad souls that go there will suffer hell-fire together with the demons forever. There will be no end to their pain and suffering.

The **hell of the just** (Greek *Hades*, or Hebrew *Sheol*) was the underworld, or the abode of the dead, a temporary place where the souls of good people go after death. This is the place where they waited until Christ came to accomplish our redemption. There were no demons nor devils in the hell of the just, and the human souls waiting there did not suffer hell-fire. It is called “hell” only because it was a place separate from Heaven and God. The kind of pain that the good souls suffered was the pain of their *longing* for God: “I can’t wait to be in Heaven. I can’t wait to see God.” The

longer they waited, the more they suffered. So, although there was no hell-fire in this place, it was a kind of hell because, unlike Heaven, it was not a place of perfect happiness.

In the fifth article of the Creed we say that Christ descended into “hell.” But He did not descend into the hell of the damned. He went into the hell of the just in order to tell the good souls waiting there the good news that their long wait was over, and that they could now go to Heaven with Him. (CCC 633)

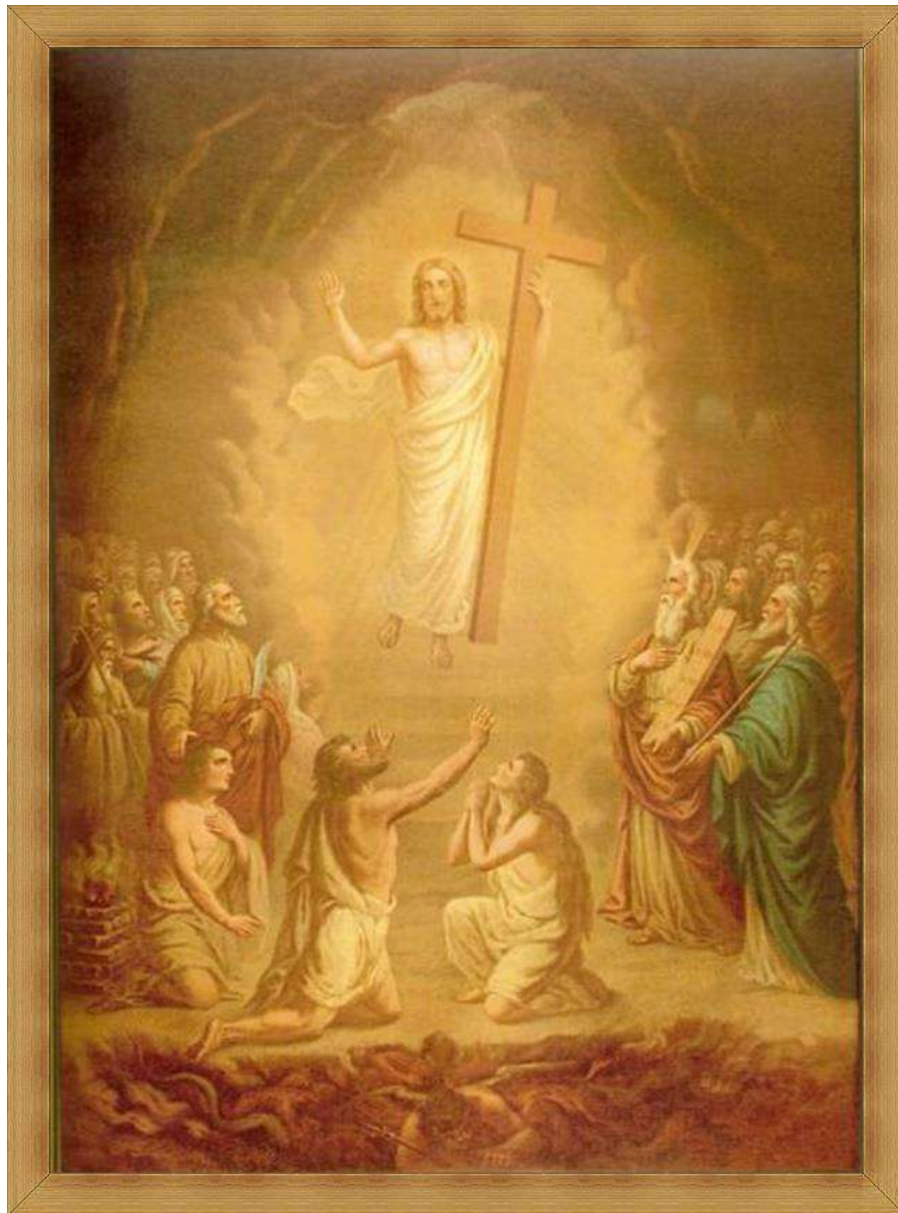


Fig 1.5.1 Christ's Descent into the Hell of the Just

3. Why were not the souls of good people (or the “just”) admitted into Heaven before the death of Jesus Christ?

The souls of good people were not admitted into Heaven before the death of Jesus Christ, because Heaven’s door was closed by the sin of Adam, and it was fitting that Jesus Christ, who reopened it by His death, should be the first to enter it.

4. If the souls of the just already went to Heaven with Christ, does the “hell of the just” still exist today?

No, the hell of the just does not exist anymore because all the good souls who were waiting there had already left and joined Christ in Heaven. However, there is an old belief that there might still exist a similar place, called the “Infants’ Limbo,” where the souls of infants, who have died without Baptism, go. Since they died without being baptized, they still had original sin in their soul. The old belief was that they couldn’t go to Heaven at all, although they would not be punished in the hell of the damned either, since they had no actual sins. In a sense the infants’ limbo was similar to the “hell of the just” because in limbo the souls of infants did not suffer hell-fire, but they were not enjoying heavenly happiness either because they were separated from God. Presently, however, the Catholic Church believes that on account of Christ’s great love for children, there is good reason to hope that God found a way to make salvation available to these infants as well. (CCC 1261)

5. The fifth article said that on the third day Christ rose from the dead. What day was that?

Christ rose from the dead on the morning of Easter Sunday. He died on the cross in the afternoon of Good Friday. That was not exactly three full days based on our method of reckoning. But the Jewish method of counting counts the days, including the first and the last day, even if these were only partial days. Thus, Friday (afternoon) + Saturday + Sunday (morning) = three days.

6. Was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ like the resurrection of other people who had been raised from the dead?

No, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was not like the resurrection of other people who had been raised from the dead, because He rose by His own power, while the others were raised solely by the power of God.

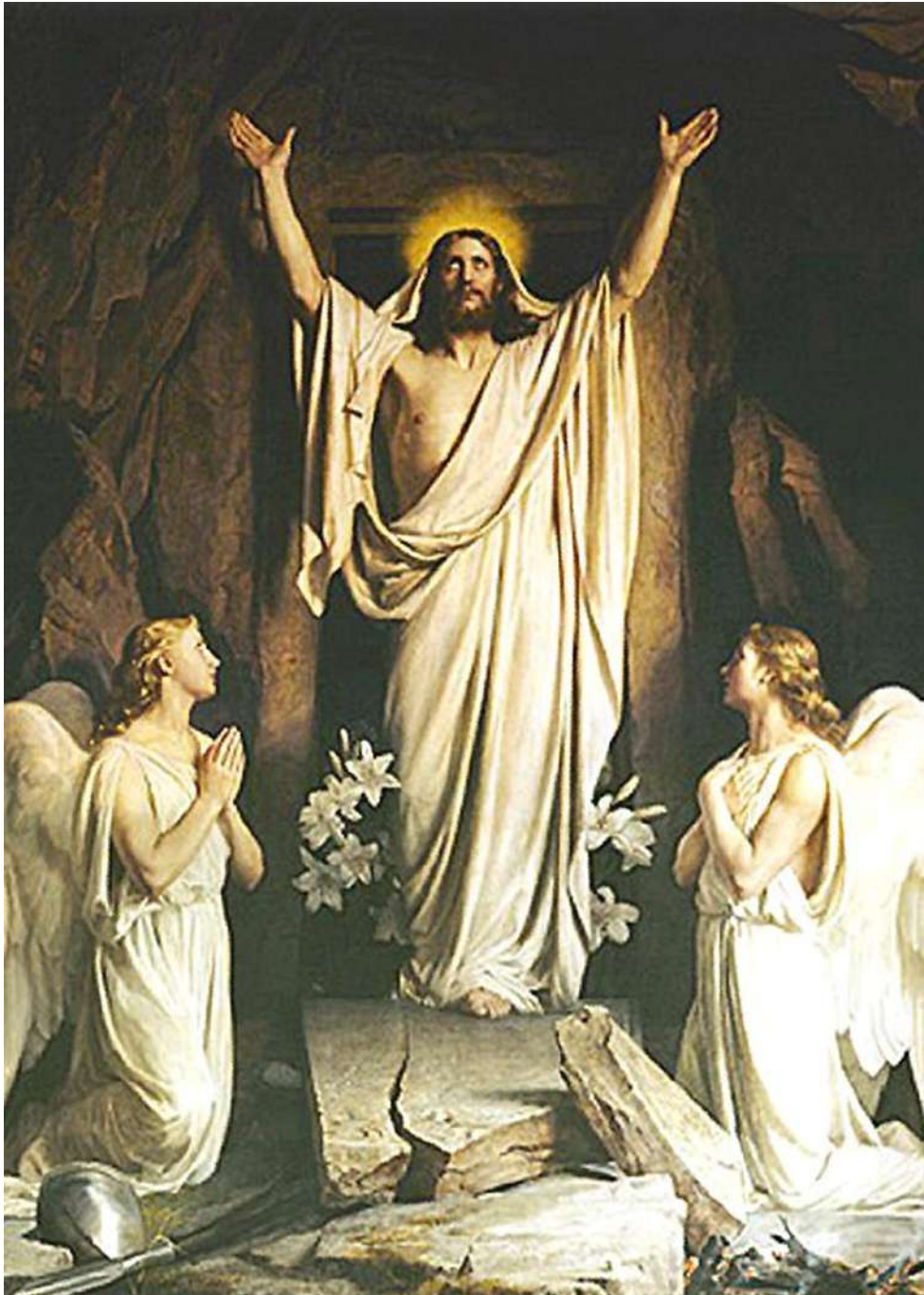


Fig 1.5.2 The Resurrection

7. Was Christ's risen body similar to the bodies of those who had been raised from the dead, such as Lazarus (John 11:43-44)?

No, because Christ's Resurrection was not a simple return to earthly life, but to a glorified bodily life unrestricted by the limitations of space and time. For example, His resurrected body is no longer subject to hunger, sickness or death, and He can now be present anywhere He wants to be at the swiftness of thought. On the other hand, the other people who were also raised from the dead merely returned to their original earthly lives, and their bodies were still subject to the limitations of the present life, which included hunger, sickness and death. (CCC 645)

8. Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead by His power or was He raised from the dead?

As God, Christ rose from the dead *by His power*. Speaking about His body He said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again" (John 10:18). *As man*, however, Christ's human body needed to be raised from the dead by God. And the Resurrection of His body from the dead, just like the formation of His body in the womb of the Virgin Mary, was the work of the three Divine Persons. (CCC 648).

ARTICLE 6: *“He ascended into Heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”*

1. What does the sixth article of the Creed teach us?

The sixth article of the Creed teaches us that Jesus Christ, forty days after His Resurrection, ascended of Himself into Heaven in the sight of His mother, His Apostles and disciples; and that while as God He was equal to His Father in glory, as man He has been raised above all the angels and saints, and constituted Lord of all things.

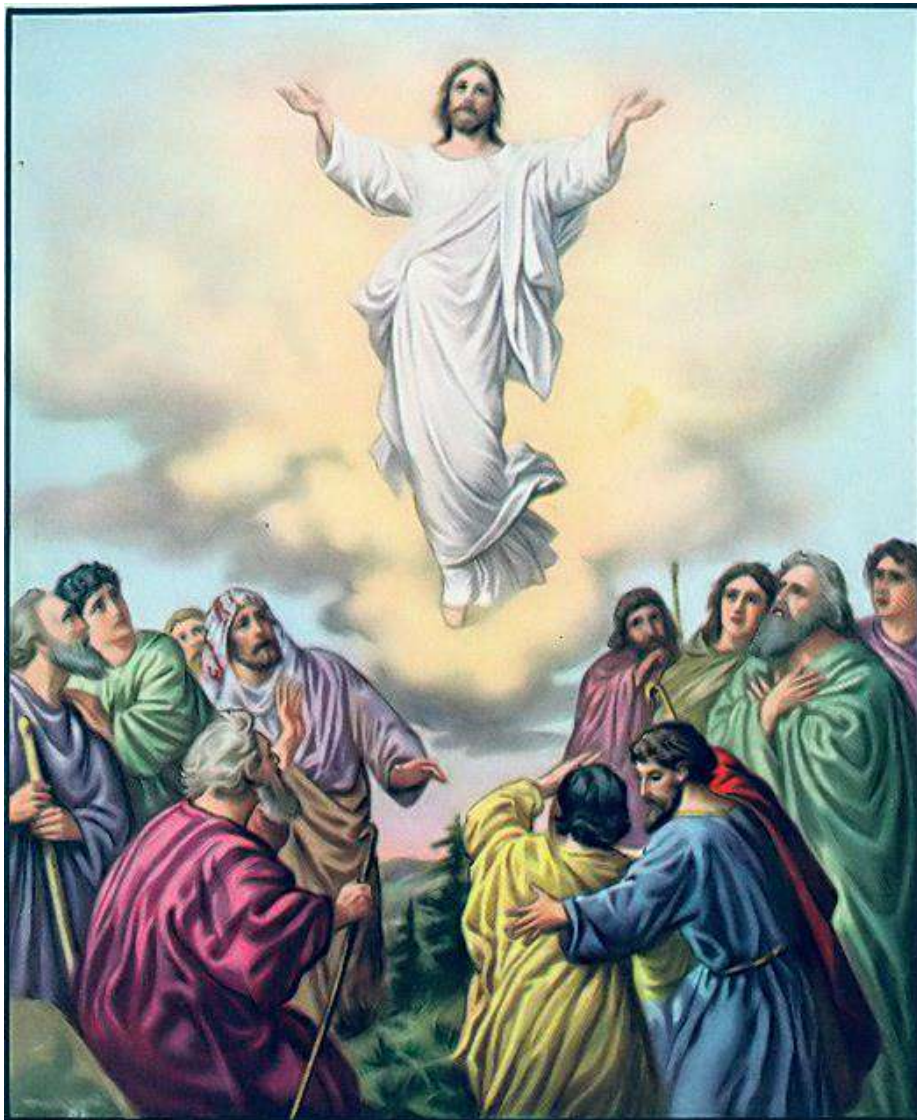


Fig 1.6.1 The Ascension of our Lord

2. Why did Jesus Christ remain forty days on earth after His Resurrection before ascending into Heaven?

After His Resurrection Jesus Christ remained forty days on earth before ascending into Heaven, to prove by several apparitions that He was not a ghost and that He had truly risen, and to instruct the Apostles still further, and to confirm them in the truths of faith.

3. Why did Jesus Christ ascend into Heaven?

Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven: (1) To take possession of the Kingdom He had merited by His death; (2) To prepare the place of our glory, and to be our Mediator and Advocate with the Father, and (3) To send the Holy Spirit upon His Apostles. (CCC 666, 667)

4. Where did Jesus Christ ascend into Heaven?

In Mount Olivet (Acts 1:12), the same place where His bitter passion began (Luke 22:39).

5. Explain the words, “is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.”

The words “is seated” are just a figurative way of signifying the inauguration of Christ’s Kingdom (Dan 7:14). The words, “at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty,” are again a figurative expression because the Father, since He is a spirit, has neither a right nor a left hand. The expression merely denotes that while Christ, *as God*, is equal to His Father in glory, *as man*, He has a place of honor above all creatures, even above the highest angel in Heaven. (CCC 663, 664)

6. Where is Jesus Christ now?

As God, Jesus Christ is everywhere. As man, He is physically in Heaven and sacramentally in the Holy Eucharist. The presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is not a physical presence, which is why you do not see His head, body, arms and legs, but His sacramental presence is nonetheless a *real* presence.



Fig 1.6.2 Christ Seated at the Right Hand of the Father

ARTICLE 7: “From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.”

1. What does the seventh article of the Creed teach us?

The seventh article of the Creed teaches us that at the end of the world Jesus Christ, in all His glory and majesty, will come from Heaven to judge all men, both good and bad, and to give to each of them the reward or the punishment he shall have merited.

2. When will Christ judge us?

Christ will judge us twice: **first**, immediately after death; **second**, on the last day (or at the end of the world). The first judgment is called the *particular judgment*. It is called “particular” because only one particular person is judged. The second judgment (or the Last Judgment) is called the *general judgment*. It is called “general” because every person, including the angels and the devils, will be judged.

3. At the particular judgment what rewards or punishments are appointed for the souls of those who have died?

Souls that are perfectly sinless and who have no attachments to sin will go straight to **Heaven**. Souls that have small sins will also go to Heaven, but they will first have to go to **purgatory** for further purification, and to satisfy any temporal punishments due to their forgiven mortal sins. Souls that have unforgiven mortal sins are condemned to suffer with the demons in the **hell of the damned**.

4. How shall we be judged?

We shall be judged according to all our thoughts, desires, words, works and omissions. We will not be judged only according to how popular, or how successful and how rich we had been in the world, but how much we have loved and served Him and our neighbors for His sake. **IMPORTANT: Read Matthew 25:31-46.**

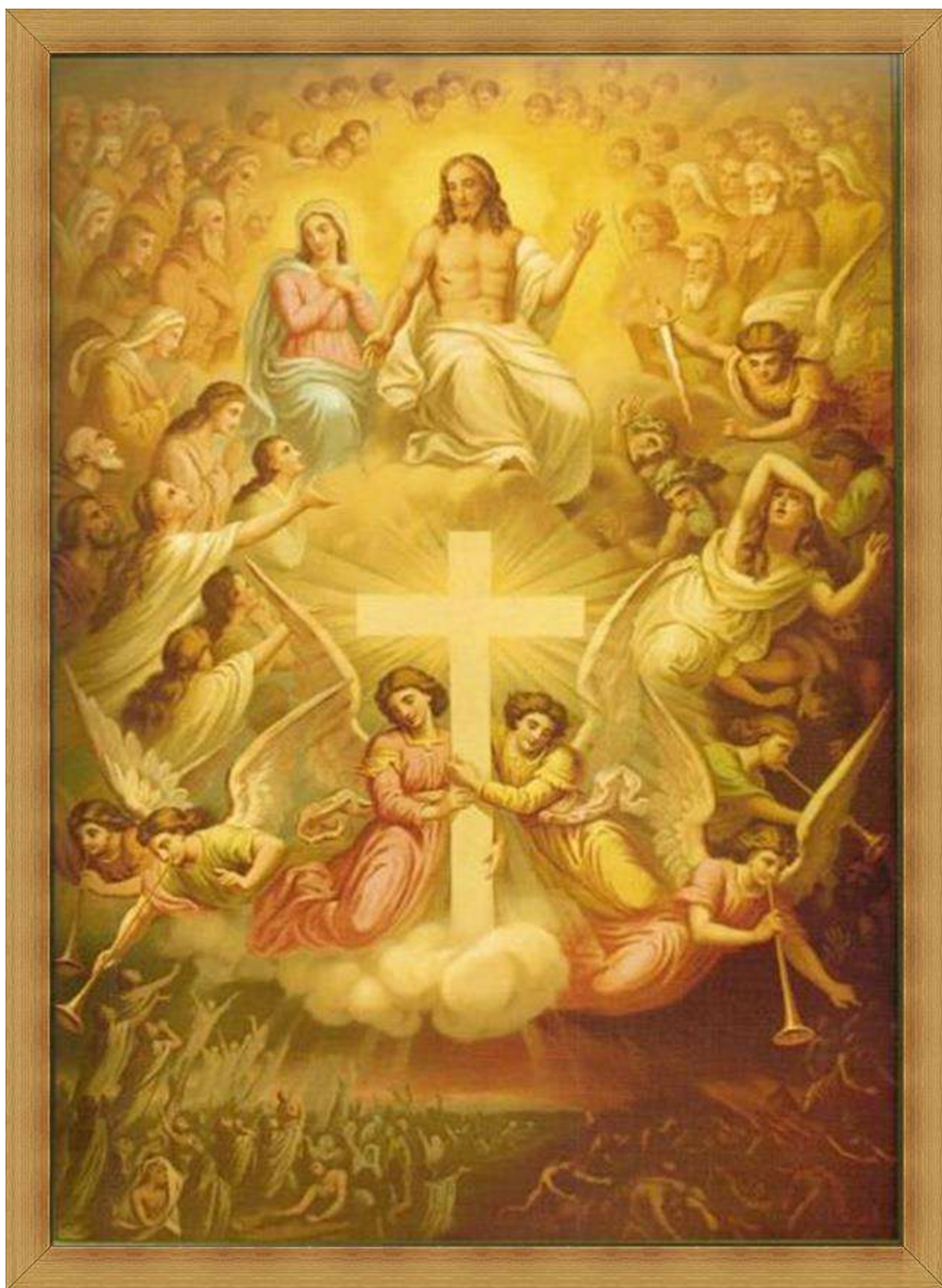


Fig 1.7.1 The Last Judgment

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5. According to our Lord's description in the Gospel of St. Matthew, what will the Just Judge say to the good?

The Just Judge (Jesus Christ) will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt 25:34). Thus, the good will go to Heaven.

6. And what will the Just Judge say to the wicked?

To the wicked He will say, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt 25:41). Thus, the wicked will go to the hell of the damned.

7. If everyone has to be judged by Jesus Christ in particular judgment immediately after death, why must all be judged in the general judgment?

We must all be judged in the general judgment for several reasons: (1) That God may be glorified; (2) That Jesus Christ may be glorified; (3) That the saints may be glorified and receive the reward of their good works; (4) That the wicked may be confounded and receive the punishment that they have deserved; and (5) That along with the soul the body may receive its sentence of reward or punishment.

8. How will God's glory be manifested in the general judgment?

God's glory will be manifested in the general judgment in this way, that all shall then know how justly God governs the world, even though here on earth the good are often afflicted and the wicked are often in prosperity.

9. How will the glory of Jesus Christ be manifested in the general judgment?

The glory of Jesus Christ will be manifested in the general judgment in this way, that He who was unjustly condemned by men, shall then come before the whole world as the Supreme Judge of all.

10. How will the glory of the saints be manifested in the general judgment?

The glory of the saints will be manifested in the general judgment in this way, that many of them who died despised by the wicked, shall be glorified before the whole world.

11. How great will the confusion of the wicked be in the general judgment?

In the general judgment great indeed shall be the confusion of the wicked, especially of those who have oppressed the just and who have tried in this life to be esteemed as men of virtue and goodness. On the last day their most hidden sins will be exposed before the whole world, and everyone will see how wicked they really were (1 Cor 4:5).

12. Will purgatory still exist after the general judgment?

No. After the general judgment there will be only Heaven and Hell. This is because the general judgment will be preceded by the resurrection of all the dead, which includes those in purgatory. (CCC 1038)

13. When will the general judgment take place?

The General Judgment will happen during the second coming of Christ, when He returns in glory. But only the Father knows the day and the hour when Christ will come again.

14. Are there any events that will precede the second coming of Christ?

Yes, the following events are expected to happen before the Second Coming:

- a. *The widespread conversion of the Jews to Christianity, as prophesied by St. Paul: “For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery ... that blindness in part has happened in Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in. So all Israel should be saved...” (Rom 11:25-26).*

- b. *There will be a great apostasy from the faith.* “As it came to pass in the days of Noah,” Christ said, “so shall it also be in the days of the Son of man. They ate and drank, they married wives and were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all... Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed” (Luke 17:26-27, 30). A little later Christ also said, “But yet the Son of man, when He comes, shall He find faith on earth, do you think?” (Luke 18:8)
- c. *The Antichrist, the “man of sin” or “the son of perdition” will appear and deceive many people by false miracles, and attempt to substitute himself in the place of Christ.* Thus, St. Paul says in his epistle: “And we beseech you, brethren, regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and of our gathering together unto him: That you be not easily moved from your sense nor be terrified, neither by spirit nor by word nor by epistle, as sent from us, as if the day of the Lord were at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless there comes a revolt first, and the **man of sin** be revealed, the **son of perdition** who opposes and is exalted above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God” (2 Thes 2:1-4). This rebellion is the final assault that the devil will attempt against the Church before the second coming of Christ. (CCC 675-676)

15. Will the Antichrist be one individual or several?

Based on Sacred Scripture, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church agree that the Antichrist will be one individual. However, there will be many forerunners of the Antichrist who, because they will likewise try to deceive the elect, are also called “antichrists.” It was in this sense that St. John writes: “Many seducers are gone out into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a seducer and an antichrist.” (2 John 1:7).

ARTICLE 8: *“I believe in the Holy Spirit.”*

1. What does the eighth article of the Creed teach us?

The eighth article of the Creed teaches us that there is a Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, and that, like the Father and the Son, He is God eternal, infinite, omnipotent, Creator and Lord of all things.

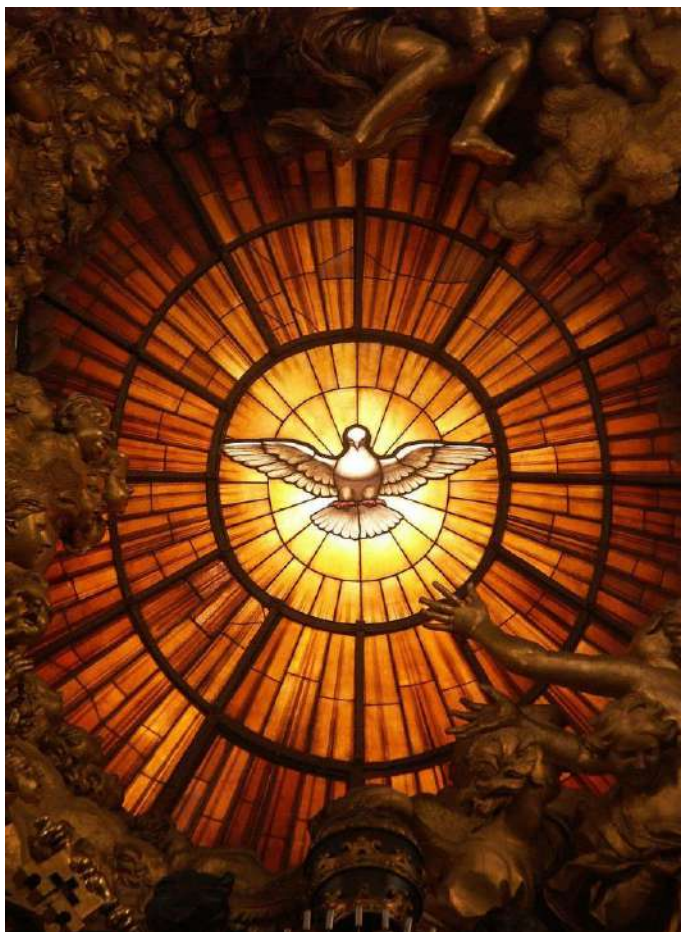


Fig 1.8.1 The Holy Spirit as a Dove in the apse of St. Peter's Basilica

2. From whom does the Holy Spirit proceed?

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, as from one Principle, by way of will and love.⁵ (CCC 246)

⁵ The Son proceeds from the Father by way of intelligence, because the Father in the Act of knowing Himself, begets His eternal Image, the Son. The Holy Spirit likewise proceeds from the Father and the Son, but by way of will and love, because the Holy Spirit proceeds as the Love between the Father and the Son.

3. If the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, it would seem as if the Father and the Son are prior to the Holy Spirit. How then can it be said that all the three Persons are eternal?

It is said that all the three Persons are eternal because the Father has begotten the Son from all eternity, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son from all eternity.

4. Why is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity specially designated by the name of the Holy Spirit?

The Third Person of the Blessed Trinity is specially designated by the name of the Holy Spirit because He proceeds from the Father and from the Son by way of spiration and of love. “Spiration” is an old English word for the act of breathing. (CCC 691)

5. What work is specially attributed to the Holy Spirit?

To the Holy Spirit is specially attributed works of love and goodness, particularly the Incarnation of the Son of God and the sanctification of souls.

6. Do the Father and the Son equally sanctify us with the Holy Spirit?

Yes, all the three Divine Persons equally sanctify us, just as all three Persons cooperated in forming the body and creating the soul of Jesus Christ. But, like the Incarnation of the Son of God, the sanctification of souls is specially attributed to the Holy Spirit because it is a work of love and goodness. (CCC 258, 689)

7. When did the Holy Spirit descend on the Apostles?

The Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, that is, fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and ten days after His Ascension. (CCC 731)

8. Where were the Apostles during the ten days preceding Pentecost?

The Apostles were gathered together in the “upper room” with the Virgin Mary and the other disciples, and were persevering in prayer (Acts 1:12-14). They were expecting the Holy Spirit, Whom Christ promised to send them (John 14:16, 26).



Fig 1.8.2 Descent of the Holy Spirit as Tongues of Fire

9. What effects did the Holy Spirit produce in the Apostles?

The Holy Spirit strengthened the faith of the Apostles, filled them with light, strength, charity, and an abundance of all His gifts.

10. Was the Holy Spirit sent for the Apostles alone?

No, the Holy Spirit was sent for the whole Church and for every faithful soul. (CCC 732)

11. What does the Holy Spirit do in the Church?

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life to the whole Church, guides her in understanding the faith, and protects her from error.

12. How does the Holy Spirit give spiritual life to the Church?

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life to the Church by giving various graces and gifts.

13. What graces does the Holy Spirit give to the Church?

The Holy Spirit gives two kinds of graces: *sanctifying grace* and *actual grace*.

Sanctifying grace is the divine life in our soul that makes us pleasing and holy before God. With sanctifying grace, we become adopted children of God, heirs of Heaven, and prince and princesses of His Kingdom. We receive sanctifying grace first by Baptism. We nourish this grace chiefly by receiving the sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, which we can receive regularly.

Actual grace is the help which the Holy Spirit gives us to do good and avoid evil. It enlightens our mind and strengthens our will to do good deeds and resist the temptation to sin. The temptation to sin comes from the devil. We receive actual grace by prayer and the performance of good works.

14. What other gifts does the Holy Spirit give to the Church?

The Holy Spirit gives seven special gifts. These gifts are Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and the Fear of the Lord (See Isa 11:2). We receive them first at Baptism, but we receive an *increase* of these gifts from the Holy Spirit especially at the Sacrament of Confirmation. These gifts in turn produce what St. Paul collectively called “fruit of the Holy Spirit,” such as charity, joy, peace, patience, etc. (Gal 5:22-23).

15. What purpose do the gifts of the Holy Spirit serve?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit help us to develop good habits, called *virtues*, and eliminate bad ones, called *vices*.



Fig 1.8.3 The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

16. Explain the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are given in the book of Isaiah, the Prophet. Here Isaiah prophesied the spiritual gifts that Christ would have: “*And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of **wisdom**, and of **understanding**, the spirit of **counsel**, and of **fortitude**, the spirit of **knowledge**, and of **godliness**. And he shall be filled with the spirit of **the fear of the Lord**” (Isa 11:2-3). The gift of godliness is more popularly known as **piety**.*

Wisdom is a gift which enables us to make a right judgment about *divine things*, so that we see things according to God’s point of view, and not according to man’s point of view. For example, by this gift we judge that virtue is better than wealth, and charity is to be preferred than science.

Understanding is a gift which helps us to penetrate more fully the truths and mysteries of our faith, which we are unable to know by the natural light of reason alone.

Counsel is a gift which allows us to make a right judgment about our actions, and to be directed by the Holy Spirit toward things that redound to God's glory, to our salvation, and to that of our neighbor.

Fortitude is a gift which inspires us with confidence to do what is good, to face dangers and to endure what is difficult, thus enabling us to overcome all obstacles, dangers and difficulties.

Knowledge is a gift enabling us to make a right judgment about *created and human things* at their proper worth, and to learn how to use them rightly and to direct them to our last end, which is God. For example, by the gift of knowledge we judge that the care of the soul is better than the care of the body. The gift of knowledge is related to the gift of wisdom because they both enable us to make a right judgment. However, the gift of knowledge refers to right judgment about created and human things, while the gift of wisdom is right judgment about divine things.

Piety (or godliness) is a gift that allows us to be moved by the Holy Spirit toward the love and worship of God, and to preserve a benevolent mind toward our neighbor for the love of God.

The **Fear of the Lord** is a gift that allows us to control our desires, and to hate anything that could separate us from God.

ARTICLE 9: *“The Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints.”*

THE CHURCH IN GENERAL

1. What does the ninth article of the Creed teach us?

The ninth article of the Creed teaches us that Jesus Christ founded a visible society on earth called the Catholic Church, and that all those who belong to this Church are in communion with (or form a community with) one another. The church community includes, not only members who are on earth, but also those who are in purgatory, and those who are in Heaven.

2. Why immediately after the article that treats of the Holy Spirit is mention made of the Catholic Church?

Immediately after the article that treats of the Holy Spirit mention is made of the Catholic Church to indicate that the Church’s holiness comes from the Holy Spirit, who is the Author of all holiness. (CCC 749)



Fig 1.9.1 St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome (near the Tiber river)

3. What does the word “church” mean?

The word “church” means an *assembly* of believers. It does not refer to the building where the people pray, but to the church-goers who gather together to pray in the building. The church-goers form an assembly of believers called the church. WE who gather together ARE the church, not the building. (CCC 751)

4. Why is the Church called the Mystical Body of Christ?

The Church is called the **Mystical Body of Christ** because its members are united by supernatural bonds with one another and with Christ, their Head. The metaphor came from St. Paul who said, “He is the head of the body, the Church” (Col 1:18).

5. Where are the members of the Catholic Church to be found?

The members of the Catholic Church are found partly in Heaven, forming the **Church Triumphant**; partly in purgatory, forming the **Church Suffering**; and partly on earth, forming the **Church Militant**. The Church on earth is called “militant” because it is still engaged in combat with the temptations and evil forces of the devil. (CCC 954)

6. Do these various parts of the Church constitute only one Church?

Yes, these various parts of the Church constitute only one Church and only one Mystical Body because they have the same Head, Jesus Christ, the same Spirit animating and uniting them, and the same goal, which is eternal happiness.

7. What other metaphor has been used for the Church besides being the “Body” of Christ?

The Church has often been referred to also as the “Bride” or “Spouse” of Christ. This metaphor also came from St. Paul who compared the union of husband and wife to that of Christ and His Church (Eph 5:22-33). (CCC 796)

THE CHURCH IN PARTICULAR

8. What is the Catholic Church?

The Catholic Church is the union or congregation of all the baptized who, still living on earth, profess the same faith and the same Law of Jesus Christ, participate in the same sacraments, and obey their lawful pastors, particularly the Roman Pontiff.

9. What is necessary to be a member of the Church?

To be a member of the Church it is necessary to be baptized, to believe and profess the teachings of Jesus Christ, to participate in the same sacraments, and to acknowledge the pope and the other lawful pastors of the Church.

10. Who are the lawful pastors of the Church?

The lawful pastors of the Church are the Roman Pontiff, that is, the pope, who is the Supreme Pastor, and the bishops. Other priests, also, and especially the parish priests, have a share in the pastoral office, subject to the bishop and the pope.

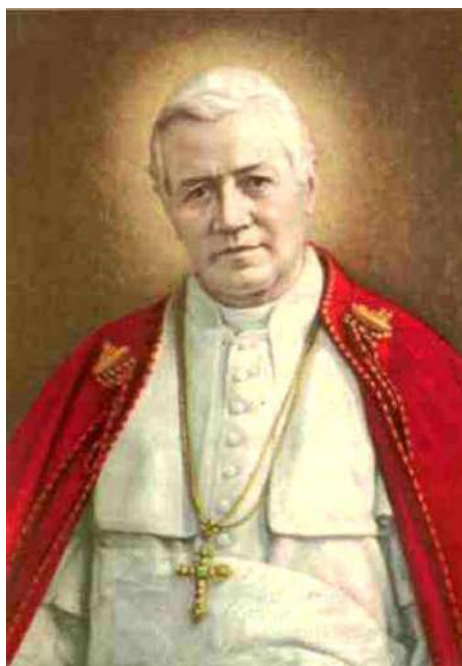


Fig 1.9.2 Pope St. Pius X

The Pope who approved First Communion for Children
Patron Saint of First Communicants

11. Why do you say that the pope is the Supreme Pastor of the Church?

Because Jesus Christ assigned this office to St. Peter, the first pope, by these words: “I say to you: that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church,... and I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven... Whatever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in Heaven, and whatever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in Heaven” (Matt 16:18-19). Later Christ also said to him: “Feed My lambs, feed My sheep” (John 21:15, 17). Therefore, anyone who succeeds St. Peter keeps his office as Supreme Pastor of the Church.

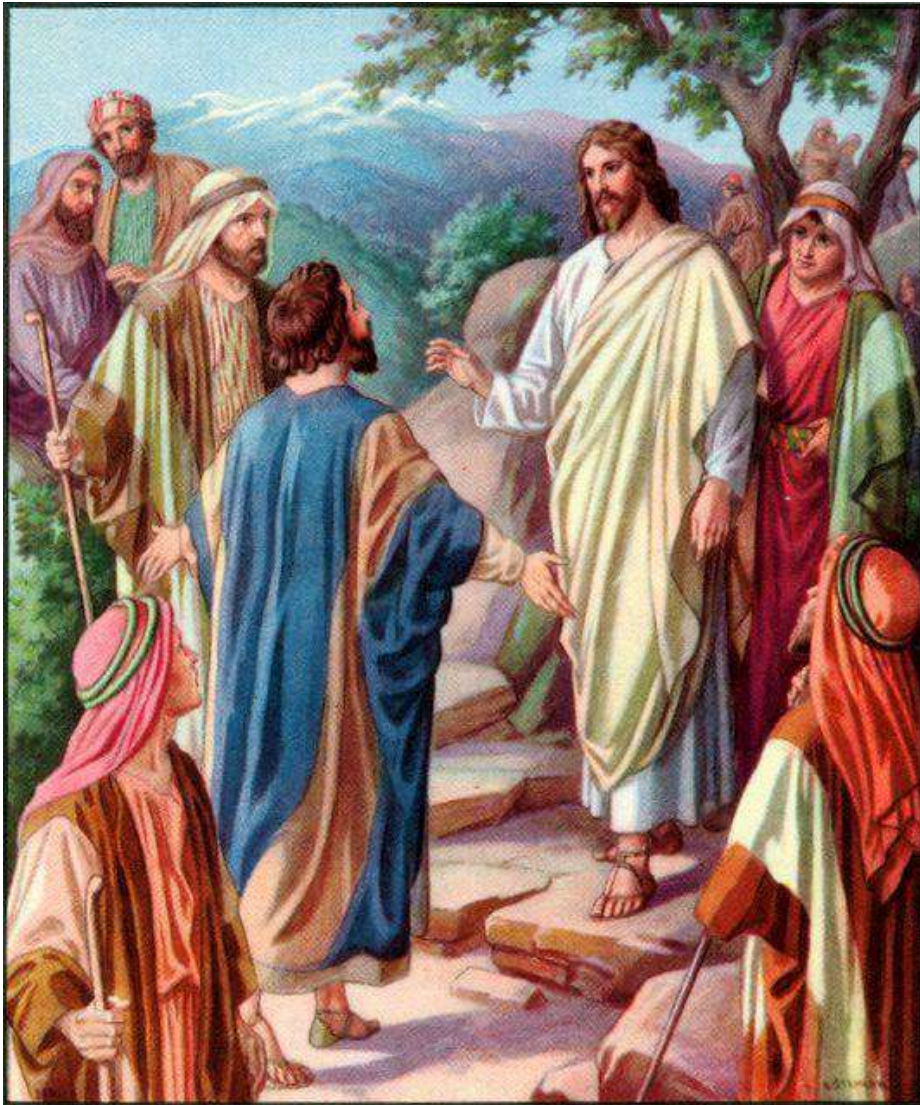


Fig 1.9.3 Christ Made St. Peter Head of the Church

12. Do the many societies of persons who are baptized but who do not acknowledge the pope as their Head belong to the Catholic Church?

No, those who do not acknowledge the pope as their Head do not belong to the Catholic Church.

13. How can you tell that the Catholic Church is the true church founded by Jesus Christ?

The true church founded by Christ is distinguished from other societies that claim to be true by four marks: she is **One, Holy, Catholic** and **Apostolic**. By these four marks you can tell that the Catholic Church **is** the true church founded by Christ. (CCC 811)

14. Why is the Catholic Church one?

The Catholic Church is one, because her children of all ages and places are united together in the same faith, in the same worship, in the same law, and in participation of the same sacraments, under the same visible Head. There cannot be more than one church. For, as there is but one God, one faith and one Baptism, the true church can only be one. Among all Christian churches, the Catholic Church alone is clearly one. She has one faith, one pope, one denomination anywhere in the world. (CCC 813)

15. Why is the Catholic Church holy?

The Catholic Church is holy because her Founder, Jesus Christ, is holy; her saints are holy; her faith, her laws and her sacraments are holy, which the Catholic Church also is. (CCC 823)

16. Why is the Catholic Church catholic?

The word “catholic” means *universal*. The Catholic Church is catholic because she embraces the faithful of all nations, of all times, of all places, and of all ages and conditions. The Catholic Church satisfies this character of universality. It is the same for all people of all ages anywhere in the world. (CCC 830 - 831)

17. Why is the Catholic Church Apostolic?

The Catholic Church is Apostolic because: (a) She is founded on, and has a history that goes back without a break to the time of, the Apostles; (b) She believes and teaches all that the Apostles believed and taught; and (c) She is guided and governed by their lawful successors. Only the Catholic Church is Apostolic. Other sects date back only to the sixteenth century or later, but the Catholic Church dates back to the first century of Christianity, that is, the time of Christ and the Apostles. (CCC 857)



Fig 1.9.4 Icon of Christ and the 12 Apostles

18. To be saved, is it enough to be any sort of member of the Catholic Church?

No, to be saved it is not enough to be any sort of member of the Catholic Church. It is necessary to be a *living* member.

19. Who are the living members of the Church?

The living members of the Church are the just, and the just alone, that is, those who are actually in the state of grace.

20. And who are the dead members?

The dead members of the Church are the faithful in mortal sin. These members may be physically alive, but are spiritually dead.

21. Can one be saved outside the Catholic Church?

No, no one can be saved outside the Catholic Church, just as no one could be saved from the flood outside the Ark of Noah, which was a figure of the Church. This means that those who know the Church to be founded by Christ, but choose not to join it, will not be saved. However, those people who, *through no fault of their own*, are ignorant of Christ or the Church, but who seek God with sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do God's will, are indeed separated from the body of the Church, but are united to the soul of the Church and, therefore, may be saved. (CCC 846, 847)

22. How were the Patriarchs, the Prophets, and other just men who lived before the coming of Christ saved?

The good people who lived before the coming of Christ were saved by the faith they had in Christ to come, by means of which they spiritually belonged to the Church.

23. Suppose that a man is a member of the Catholic Church, but does not put her teachings into practice, will he be saved?

He who is a member of the Catholic Church, but does not put her teachings into practice nor persevere in charity, is a dead member,

and hence will not be saved. It is not enough to be a member of the Catholic Church. One must also be a *living* member by persevering in charity and doing good works. (CCC 837)

24. Are we then obliged to believe all the truths that the Church teaches us, and to do all that the Church commands?

Yes, we are obliged to believe all the truths that the Church teaches, and to do all that the Church commands, because Jesus Christ said to the Apostles: “He who hears you, hears Me, and he who despises you, despises Me” (Luke 10:16).

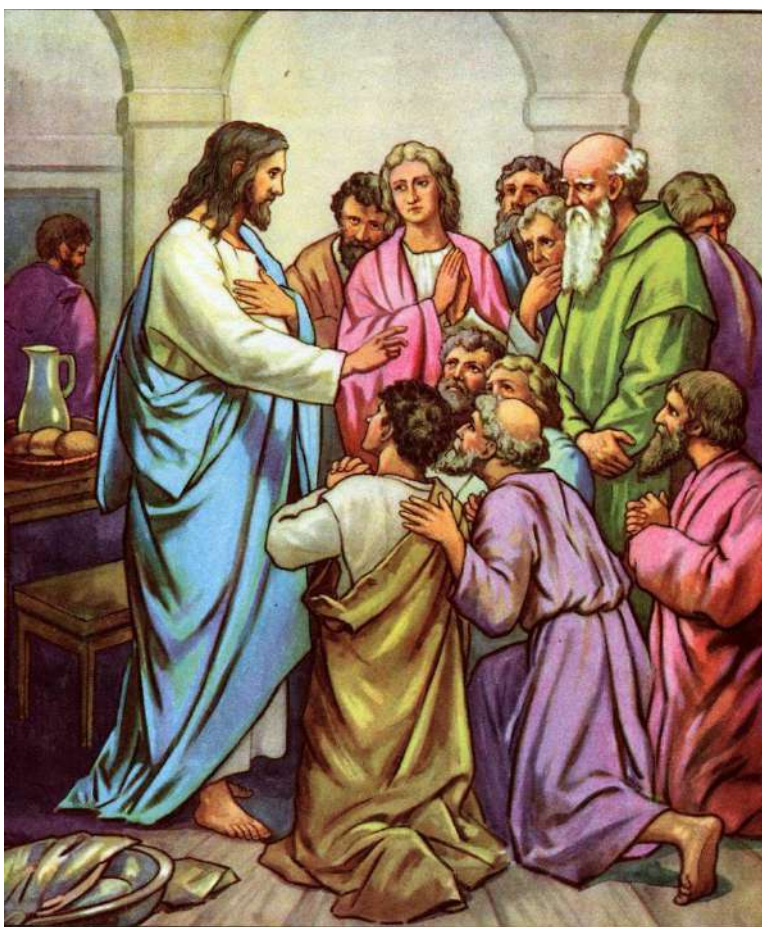


Fig 1.9.5 Christ Promised to Send the Holy Spirit

“I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete,⁶ that he may abide with you forever ... The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatever I shall have said to you” (John 14:16, 26)

⁶ The “Paraclete” is another word for advocate or counselor. The Holy Spirit is our Paraclete, the One whom Christ sends to counsel and guide us.

25. Can the Church err in what she proposes for our belief?

No, the Church cannot err in what she proposes for our belief, because according to the promise of Jesus Christ she is unfailingly assisted in her teachings and protected from error by the Holy Spirit.

26. Is the Catholic Church infallible, then?

Yes, the Catholic Church is infallible, and so, those who reject her teachings lose the faith and become heretics.

27. Can the Catholic Church be destroyed or perish?

No, the Catholic Church may be persecuted, but she can neither be destroyed nor perish. Many kingdoms, civilizations and societies have already come and gone, but the Catholic Church still stands since the time she was founded. She will last till the end of the world because Jesus Christ promised that He would be with her till the end of time (Matt 28:20).

28. Why is the Catholic Church so persecuted?

The Catholic Church is so persecuted because, like her Founder Jesus Christ, who was also persecuted, she disapproves sin and vice, combats error and immorality, and condemns all acts of injustice and oppression.

29. Does a Catholic have any other duties toward the Church?

Every Catholic ought to have a boundless love for the Church, ought to consider himself infinitely honored and happy in belonging to her, and ought to work for her glory by every means in his or her power.

THE MAGISTERIUM

30. Is there any distinction between the various members of the Catholic Church?

There is a very notable distinction between the members of the Catholic Church. For there are some who rule and some who obey; some who teach and some who are taught. (CCC 873)

31. What do you call that part of the Church which teaches?

That part of the Church which teaches is called the *Magisterium*.

32. What do you call that part of the Church which is taught?

That part of the Church which is taught is called the Learning Church, the Church Taught, or simply the faithful.

33. Who set up this distinction in the Church?

Jesus Christ Himself established this distinction in the Church.

34. Are the *Magisterium* and the Learning Church two Churches?

The *Magisterium* and the Learning Church are two distinct parts of one and the same Church, just as in the human body the head is distinct from the rest of the body, and yet forms but one body with them.

35. Of whom is the *Magisterium* composed?

The *Magisterium* is composed of all the bishops, with the pope as their head, be they dispersed throughout the world or assembled together in a Council. (CCC 880)

36. And the Learning Church, of whom is it composed?

The Learning Church, or the Church Taught, is composed of all the faithful – both lay and religious.

37. Who, then, are they who possess the Teaching Authority in the Church?

The Teaching Authority in the Church is possessed by the *Magisterium*, that means, by the pope and the bishops, and, dependent on them, by the other sacred ministers (priests and deacons). The pope, the bishops, the priests and the deacons, arranged in the order of their successive ranks, comprise the organizational structure, known as the *hierarchy*, in the Church.

38. Are we obliged to listen to the *Magisterium*?

Yes, without doubt we are obliged under pain of eternal damnation to listen to the *Magisterium*. For Jesus Christ said to the pastors of His Church, in the persons of the Apostles: “He who hears you, hears Me, and he who despises you, despises Me” (Luke 10:16).

39. Besides her teaching office does the Church have any other authority?

Yes, besides her **teaching office** the Church has authority to administer the sacraments and sacred things, which is called her **sanctifying office**; and the authority to make laws and to exact the observance of them, and this is called her **governing office**. (CCC 893, 894 – 896)

40. Does the authority possessed by the members of the hierarchy come from the people?

The authority possessed by the hierarchy does not come from the people, and it would be heresy to say it did. It comes solely from God.

41. To whom does the exercise of this authority belong?

The exercise of this authority belongs solely to the pope and to the bishops subordinate to him. However, the bishops have no authority unless they are in communion with the pope. (CCC 883)

THE POPE AND THE BISHOPS

42. What is a pope?

The pope, who is also called the sovereign pontiff, or the Roman pontiff, is the Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and the visible Head of the Catholic Church. The first pope was St. Peter himself.



Fig 1.9.6 St. Peter, the first Pope of the Catholic Church

43. Why is the pope called the Vicar of Jesus Christ?

The pope is called the Vicar or Representative of Jesus Christ on earth because he represents Christ on earth and acts in His place in governing or teaching the Church.

44. Why is the pope the Visible Head of the Church?

The pope is the Visible Head of the Church because he visibly governs her with the authority of Jesus Christ Himself, who is her invisible Head. (CCC 936)

45. Can the pope err when teaching the Church?

The pope cannot err, that is, he is *infallible* when teaching about faith and morals because of the promise of Jesus Christ that He would be with us till the end of time, and because of the unfailing assistance and protection of the Holy Spirit.

46. When is the pope infallible?

The pope is infallible when, as pastor and teacher of all Christians and in virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines and proclaims a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be believed by the entire Church. He is not infallible when he only gives his opinion about science, politics, etc., but he is infallible when he, in his office as Supreme Teacher, makes a solemn pronouncement *on matters of faith or morals* to be believed by the entire Church. He is also infallible in the *ordinary exercise* of his teaching office when he teaches or reiterates a doctrine that the Church has consistently taught through the ages. (CCC 891- 892)

47. What sin would a man commit who refuses to accept the solemn definitions of the pope?

He who refuses to accept the solemn definitions of the pope, or who even doubts them, sins against faith. And if he remains obstinate in his unbelief, he would no longer be a Catholic, but a heretic.

48. Why has God granted to the pope the gift of infallibility?

God has granted the pope the gift of infallibility in order that we all may be sure and certain of the truths which the Church teaches.

49. Does the gift of infallibility mean that the pope cannot sin?

No, the gift of infallibility prevents the pope from making false teachings, but it does not prevent him from sinning. Infallibility is not the same as impeccability, which is immunity from sin.

50. How should every Catholic act toward the pope?

Every Catholic must acknowledge the pope as Father, Pastor, and Universal Teacher, and be united with him in mind and heart in his solemn pronouncements, and even in his ordinary teaching practice when he repeats what the Church has consistently taught through the ages.

51. After the pope, who are they who by divine appointment are to be most venerated in the Church?

After the pope, those who by divine appointment are to be most venerated in the Church are the bishops. They are the pastors of the faithful, whom the Holy Spirit placed to rule the Church in the diocese entrusted to them, in dependence on the pope.

52. What is a bishop in his own diocese?

A bishop in his own diocese is the Teacher who teaches, the Steward of the sacraments and graces, and the Father who governs the faithful belonging to his diocese. (CCC 888, 893, 894)

53. Why is the bishop called the lawful Pastor?

The bishop is called the lawful Pastor because the jurisdiction, or the power which he has to govern the faithful of his diocese, is conferred upon him according to the laws and regulations of the Church.

54. Whom do the pope and the bishops succeed?

The pope is the successor of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles; while the bishops are the successors of the Apostles in all that pertains to the ordinary government of the Church.

55. Who assists the bishop in the care of souls?

The bishop is assisted in the care of souls by priests, and especially by parish priests. With due dependence on his bishop the parish priest presides over and directs a portion of the diocese, known as a *parish*.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

56. What do the words “the communion of saints” in the ninth article of the Creed teach us?

In the words “the communion of saints,” the ninth article of the Creed teaches us that the Church’s spiritual goods, both internal and external, are common to all her members because of the intimate union that exists between them. The words do not mean the receiving of Holy Communion by the saints. Rather they signify the fact that the various members of the Church, – including those on earth, those in purgatory and those in Heaven, – form a communion or community, which share in the graces and spiritual goods of the Church, and which they all hold in common. (CCC 947)

57. Which are the internal goods that are commonly shared in the Church?

The internal goods that are commonly shared in the Church are: the graces received through the sacraments; the virtues of faith, hope and charity; the infinite merits of Jesus Christ; the superabundant merits of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints; and the fruit of all the good works done in the Church. (CCC 950)

58. Which are the external goods that are commonly shared in the Church?

The external goods that are commonly shared in the Church are the sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, public prayers, religious functions, and all the other outward practices that unite the faithful.

59. Do all the children of the Church participate in this communion or sharing of goods?

All Catholics who are in the state of grace participate in the sharing of internal goods, while those who are in mortal sin do not perfectly participate in these goods.



Fig 1.9.7 The Communion of Saints

The upper half shows the saints in Heaven (the **Church Triumphant**); in the middle are the faithful on earth hearing Mass (the **Church Militant**); and the group below are the faithful departed still in purgatory (the **Church Suffering**).

60. Why can't those who are in mortal sin perfectly participate in the sharing of these spiritual goods?

Because that which unites the faithful with God and with Jesus Christ as His living members, rendering them capable of performing meritorious works for eternal life, is the grace of God which is the supernatural life of the soul. Since those who are in mortal sin are without the grace of God, they are excluded from perfectly sharing in the spiritual goods, nor can they accomplish works meritorious toward eternal life.

61. Do Christians then, who are in mortal sin derive no advantage from the internal and spiritual goods of the Church?

Christians who are in mortal sin still continue to derive some advantage from the internal and spiritual goods of the Church, inasmuch as they still preserve their Christian character which is indelible, and the virtue of faith which is the basis of justification. They are aided, too, by the prayers and good works of the faithful toward obtaining the grace of conversion to God.

62. Can those in mortal sin participate in the external goods of the Church?

Those in mortal sin can participate in the external goods of the Church, unless indeed they are cut off from the Church by excommunication.

63. Why are the members of this communion (or community) called saints?

The members of this communion or community are called "saints" because all on earth are called to sanctity and have been sanctified by Baptism; while those in Heaven have already attained perfect sanctity, and those in purgatory are undergoing purification and will eventually attain perfect sanctity.

64. So, does the communion of saints extend to Heaven and purgatory?

Yes, the communion of saints extends to Heaven and purgatory, because charity unites the Church Triumphant, the Church Suffering and the Church Militant. The saints pray to God both for us and for the souls in purgatory; in turn the poor souls in purgatory praise and thank the saints and the people on earth who pray for them. We on our part give honor and glory to the saints, at the same time that we relieve the suffering souls in purgatory by our prayers and good works. The word “suffrage” is used to refer to the prayers and good works that we offer on behalf of the souls in purgatory. (CCC 962, 1475)

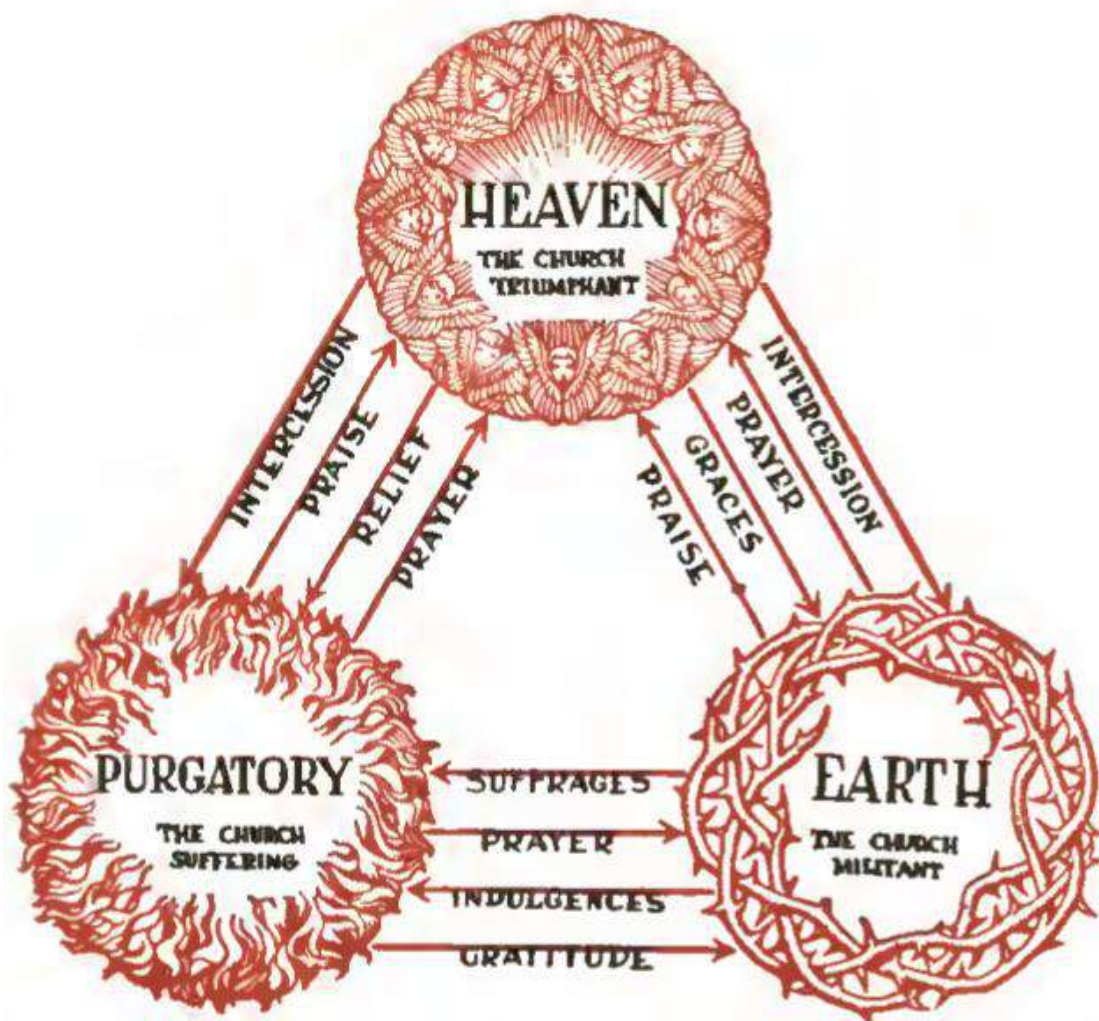


Fig 1.9.8 Diagram of the Communion of Saints

THOSE OUTSIDE THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

65. Who are they who do not belong to the communion of saints?

Those who are in hell do not belong to the communion of saints in the other life. In this life those who are in mortal sin, and those who are outside the Catholic Church, do not belong to the communion of saints. Note that one does not lose membership in the Catholic Church by mortal sin. However, those in mortal sin are spiritually dead members and cannot perfectly participate in the communion of saints.

66. Who are they who are outside the true Church?

Outside the true Church are the infidels, the Jews, the heretics, the apostates, the schismatics, and the excommunicated.

67. Who are the infidels?

The infidels are those who have not been baptized and do not believe in Jesus Christ as God, because they either believe in a different god or gods, or, though admitting one true God, they do not believe in Jesus Christ as the true God; for instance, the Muslims, the Hindus, the Buddhists, etc.

68. Who are the Jews?

The Jews are those who profess the Law of Moses; have not received Baptism; and do not believe in Jesus Christ as the promised Savior of the World.

69. Who are the heretics?

Heretics are those who had been baptized, but who refuse to believe one or more truths revealed by God and taught as an article of faith by the Catholic Church; for example, the Arians, the Nestorians, and the various Protestant sects.

70. Who are the apostates?

Apostates are those who abjure, or by some external act, deny the Catholic faith which they previously professed.

71. Who are the schismatics?

Schismatics are those Christians who, while not explicitly denying any dogma, yet voluntarily separate themselves from the Catholic Church, that is, from their lawful pastors.

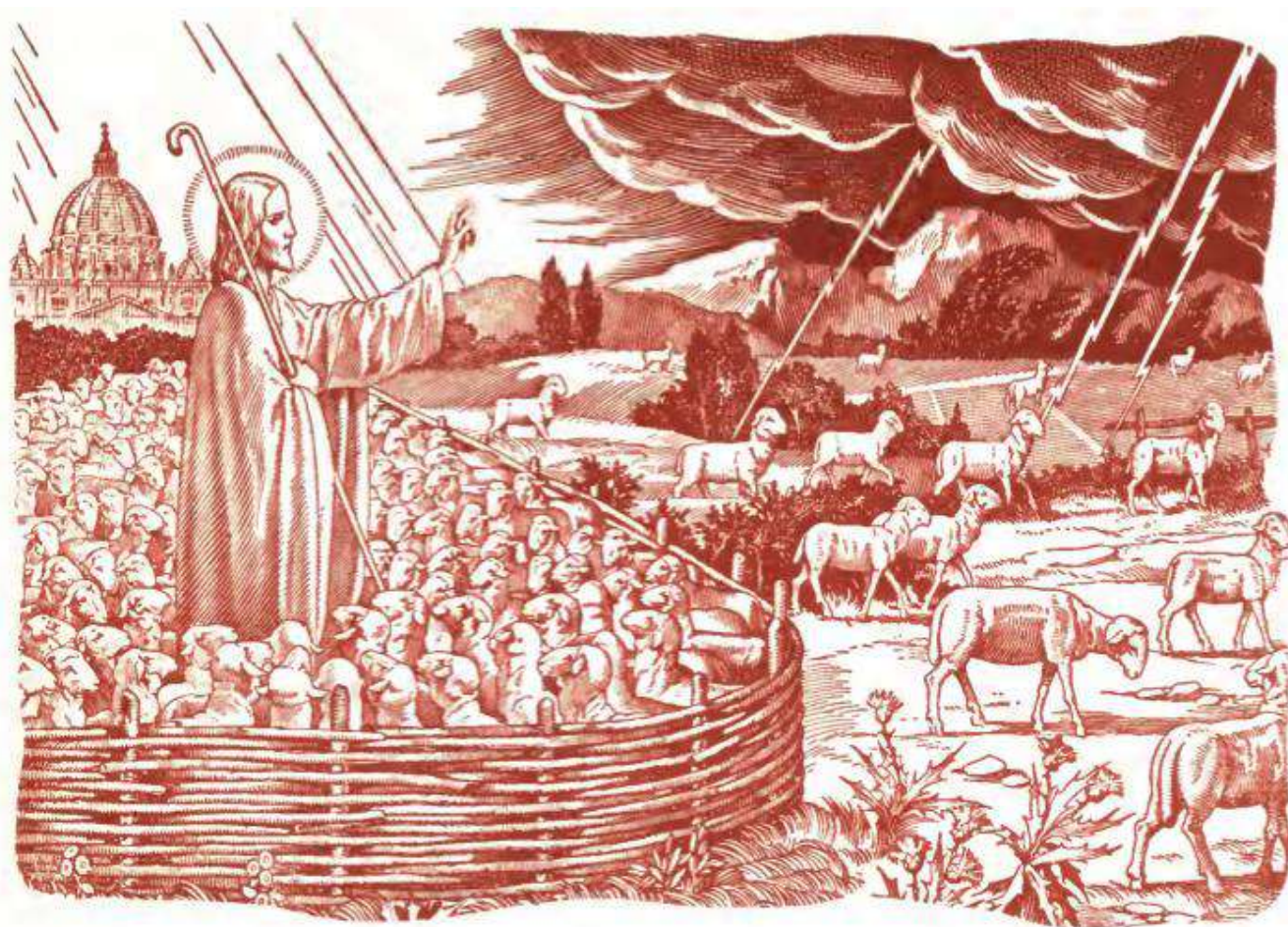


Fig 1.9.9 Sheep outside the Fold

Those who are outside the Catholic Church are like sheep outside the fold. This is unfortunate. Christ wished all the faithful to be members of the one, holy, catholic and Apostolic Church, so “that there shall be one fold and one shepherd” (John 10:16). Note that those in mortal sin are still in the fold, but they are like dead sheep within the fold, and cannot share the joy of the living.

72. Who are the excommunicated?

The excommunicated are those who, because of grievous transgressions, are punished by being cut off from membership in the Catholic Church by the pope or by their bishop, who, however, hopes for and desires their return back to the Church.

73. Should excommunication be dreaded?

Excommunication should be greatly dreaded, because it is the severest and most terrible punishment the Church can inflict upon her rebellious and obstinate children.

74. Of what goods are the excommunicated deprived?

The excommunicated are deprived of public prayers, of the sacraments, of indulgences, and of Christian burial.

75. Can we in any way help the excommunicated?

We can in some way help the excommunicated and all others who are outside the true Church, by salutary advice, by prayers and good works, and by begging God in His mercy to grant them the grace of being converted to the faith and of entering into the communion of saints.

76. What should our attitude be toward those who are outside the Catholic Church?

We ought to treat them with kindness and respect, since people do not lose their human dignity just because they have different religious beliefs. If possible we should also work for the unity of all believers, that the dream of our Lord may be fulfilled, that “there shall be one fold and one shepherd” (John 10:16). This idea of promoting unity among all believers is known as *ecumenism*. (CCC 820)

77. Are there false and true approaches to ecumenism?

Yes. The true approach to ecumenism, or toward the unity of all believers, is by helping people of other faiths see and accept the bases and truths of our Catholic faith, and to reject incompatible and false beliefs. True ecumenism cannot be achieved simply by closing our eyes to the differences or incompatibilities in the faiths of different religions. To think that one can achieve unity simply by placing idols of other religions inside Catholic Churches, or by praying together with people of other faiths without having a common God to pray to, or by bending and watering down the doctrines and liturgy of the Church and being silent when the doctrines and traditional practices of the Church are unfairly criticized, is to pursue the path of freemasonry, syncretism and *false ecumenism*.

True ecumenism requires familiarity with, or knowledge of the beliefs of other religions. But true ecumenism is not attained simply by an ineffectual dialogue that consists merely in an exchange of beliefs with people of other faiths but remaining silent about their erroneous doctrines. The way to true ecumenism is by a combination of **charity** and **sound scholarship**. It is by the practice of *holiness*, clear *expounding* of the doctrines of the faith, and adequate *refutation* of incompatible teachings, that the eyes of the ignorant are opened and the hearts of the lukewarm are inflamed. In past centuries the truth and moral beauty of the Catholic Church shone brilliantly in the holiness and learning displayed by her doctors and saints. The idea that the Church today should only be embracing non-Catholics but not refuting erroneous or false beliefs is false ecumenism. Vatican II's call for true ecumenism is a call for prayerful charity and scholarship, sanctity and deep learning, not a call for mediocrity and indifference, silence and timidity in the face of new and ancient errors. (CCC 820-822)

ARTICLE 10: *“The forgiveness of sins.”*

1. What does the tenth article of the Creed teach us?

The tenth article of the Creed teaches us that Jesus Christ has left to His Church the power of forgiving sins.

2. Can the Catholic Church forgive every sort of sin?

Yes, the Catholic Church can forgive all sins, no matter how many or how grave they may be, because Jesus Christ has given her full power to bind and to loose. (CCC 982)



Fig 1.10.1 The Prodigal Son Begged Forgiveness from his Father

3. Who exercises this power of forgiving sins in the Church?

Those who exercise the power of forgiving sins in the Church are, first of all, the pope, who alone possesses this power in all its fullness; then the bishops, and, dependent upon the bishops, the priests. (CCC 986)

4. How does the Church forgive sins?

The Church forgives sins through the merits of Jesus Christ by conferring the sacraments instituted by Him for this purpose, especially the Sacraments of Baptism and Reconciliation.

5. Are all punishments due to sin forgiven when the Church forgives sins?

No, the forgiveness of sin removes the *guilt* of sin, but not all the temporal punishments due to sin. Usually some temporal punishments remain to be satisfied even after the guilt from all the sins have been forgiven in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This is why most people have to spend time in *purgatory* even when they die without an unforgiven mortal sin in their soul. However, some or all of these punishments can be removed even on earth by receiving *indulgences* from the Church. (Indulgences will be explained in the next section.)

6. What is purgatory?

Purgatory is the place where souls who have died in the state of grace suffer the temporal punishments due to their sins. Souls in purgatory will eventually go to Heaven, but they must first satisfy the temporal punishments due for their sins. Also, purgatory is the place where souls undergo a process of purgation or purification. This is because sin does not only cause guilt. It also deforms the soul by giving it evil dispositions, inclinations and unhealthy attachment to creatures. All these deformities must be removed in purgatory before the soul can enter Heaven, because the Bible says of Heaven: “There shall not enter into it anything defiled” (Rev 21:27). (CCC 1472)

INDULGENCES

7. What is an indulgence?

An indulgence is the remission of the temporal punishment due for sins that have already been pardoned as far as their guilt is concerned. This remission is accorded by the Catholic Church outside the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (CCC 1471)

8. From whom has the Church received the power to grant indulgences?

The Church received the power to grant indulgences, by virtue of her power to bind and to loose, from our Lord Jesus Christ. (CCC 1478)

9. In what way does the Church by means of indulgences remit this temporal punishment?

The Church by means of indulgences remits this temporal punishment by applying to us the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints, which constitute what is known as the “Treasury of the Church.” (CCC 1476-1477)

10. Who has the power to grant indulgences?

The pope alone has the power to grant indulgences in the whole Church, and the bishop in his own diocese, according to the faculty given him by the pope.

11. How many kinds of indulgences are there?

Indulgences are of two kinds: plenary and partial.

A **plenary** indulgence is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to sins.

A **partial** indulgence is the remission of only a part of the temporal punishment due to sins.



Fig 1.10.2 An Angel Frees a Soul in Purgatory

Notes:

1. The picture above shows a soul being freed by an angel from purgatory. The poor souls are depicted as suffering in a pit of fire, but the “fire” in purgatory is an expiatory and cleansing fire, not a punitive fire like the hell-fire in the hell of the damned. But artists have no better way of showing this on canvas than to use the same image for an essentially different kind of fire.
2. The place called “purgatory” actually refers to a state or condition that a soul in a state of purification is in. Since disembodied souls do not occupy space, “purgatory” is technically not a material place. But we are humans and we tend to think of spiritual realities in terms of their analogy with bodily realities; so we speak of “purgatory” as if it were a place.

12. Why does the Church grant indulgences?

In granting indulgences, the Church intends to aid our incapacity to expiate all the temporal punishment in this world, by enabling us to obtain by means of works of piety and Christian charity that which in past ages Christians gained by the rigor of Church-imposed penances.

13. What value should we set on indulgences?

We should set the greatest value on indulgences because by them we satisfy the justice of God and obtain possession of Heaven sooner and more easily.

14. What are the conditions necessary to gain a plenary indulgence?

The conditions necessary to gain a plenary indulgence are the following (Norm 20.1, *Enchiridion of Indulgences*, 1999):

1. Sacramental confession and Holy Communion;
2. The completion of all prescribed works;
3. Prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father; and
4. Freedom from all attachment to sin.

15. Can indulgences be applied also to the souls in purgatory?

Yes, indulgences can be applied to the souls in purgatory, when the Vatican Apostolic Penitentiary says that they may be so applied. The souls in purgatory are no longer able to gain an indulgence for themselves, which is why they need our help. Unlike the poor souls in purgatory, we on earth can gain indulgences for ourselves, but we can also ask God to apply the indulgences we earn to the souls in purgatory. This is known as *suffrage*.

ARTICLE 11: “*The resurrection of the body.*”

1. What does the eleventh article of the Creed teach us?

The eleventh article of the Creed teaches us that *all* men will rise again, every soul resuming the body it had in this life. (CCC 998)

2. How will the resurrection of the dead be accomplished?

The resurrection of the dead will be accomplished by the power of Almighty God and the ministry of the angels: “For the Lord himself shall come down from Heaven with commandment and with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God; and the dead who are in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thes 4:15).

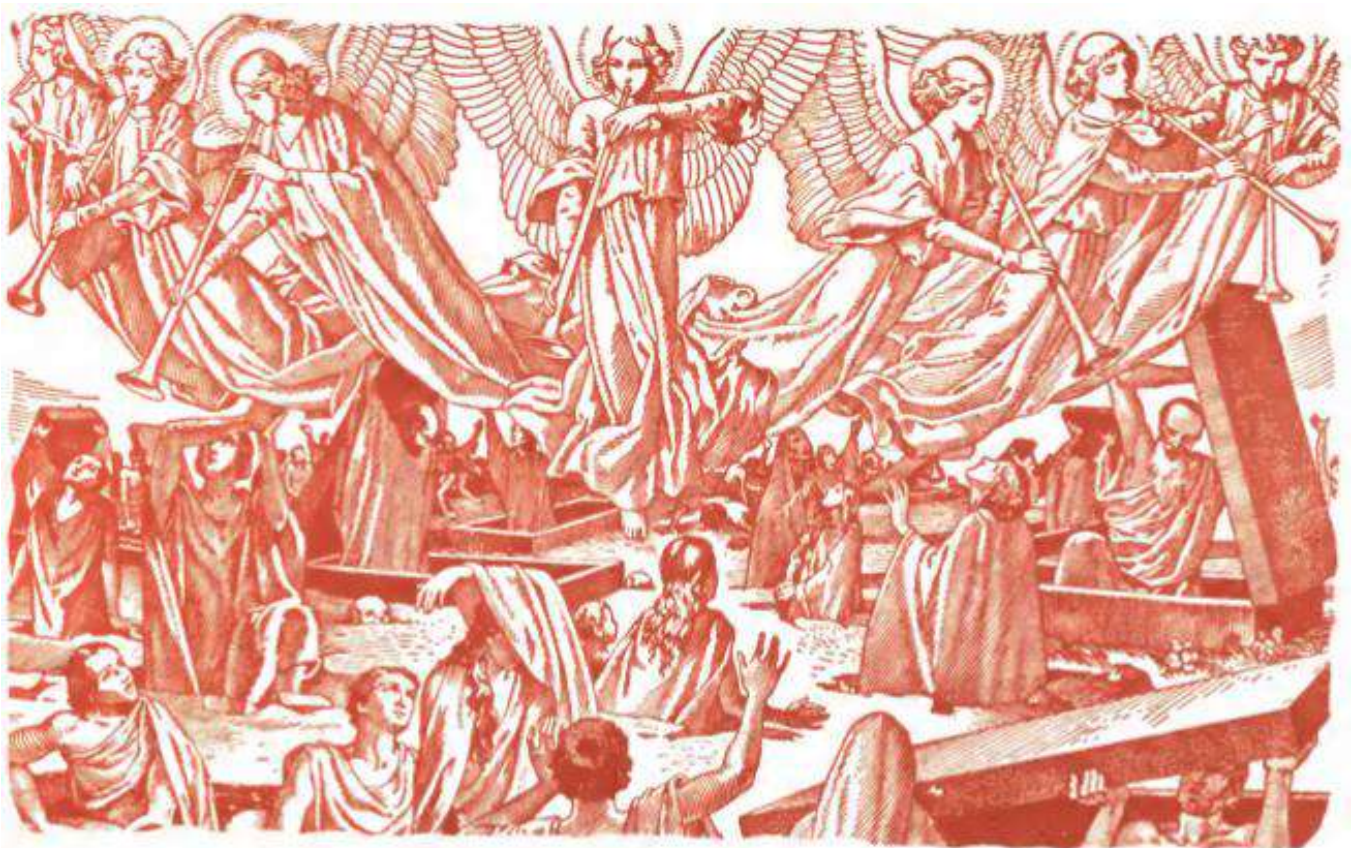


Fig 1.11.1 The Resurrection of the Body

3. What about those who were cremated, will they also rise again?

It does not really matter whether the dead was cremated or buried. Everyone will rise again. Each person will rise with his selfsame body, not another person's body: "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another: this my hope is laid up in my bosom" (Job 19:25-27).

4. If you had a deformity when you were born or when you died, will you rise up with a deformed body?

Since St. Paul said that the dead shall rise *incorruptible* (1 Cor 15:52), we believe that in the resurrection of the dead the bodies (even of sinners) will generally be restored to their natural condition, that means, without defects or deformities. (CCC 997)

5. How long will it take for the dead to rise?

The resurrection of the dead will happen very quickly: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye..." (1 Cor 15:52)

6. When will the resurrection of the dead take place?

The resurrection of the dead will take place at the end of the world, during the second coming of Christ. Then this will be followed by the general judgment. (CCC 1001, 1038)

7. Why does God will the resurrection of the body?

God wills the resurrection of the body for three reasons: (a) in order that the soul, having done good or evil while united with the body, may be rewarded or punished along with it; (b) because we are not destined to exist as disembodied souls, since a human being by nature is a *composite* of body and soul; and (c) as God has given greater dignity to the human body by taking it (as part of the human nature that He assumed), so greater dignity is given to the body when the soul reunites with it.

8. Will all rise in the same way?

No, there will be a vast difference between the bodies of the blessed and the bodies of the damned. For only the bodies of the blessed shall have, like the risen Christ, the features and endowments of glorified bodies.

9. What are the features and endowments that are to characterize the bodies of the blessed?

The bodies of the blessed will be like a “spiritual body,” similar to Christ’s glorified body (CCC 999).

They shall have the following features, endowments or gifts:

1. **Impassability**, by which they can never again be subject to evil, nor to any kind of pain, nor to need of food, of rest or the like (1 Cor 15:53);
2. **Brightness** or **Clarity**, by which they shall shine as the sun and as so many stars (1 Cor 15: 41-42);
3. **Agility**, by which they shall be able to pass in a moment and without fatigue from one place to another, and from earth to Heaven (1 Cor 15:43-44); and
4. **Subtlety**, by which without hindrance they shall be able to penetrate or pass through any body, as did Jesus Christ who after the resurrection passed through closed doors (John 20:19)

10. And what about the bodies of the damned?

The bodies of the damned will be destitute of all the endowments of the glorified bodies of the blessed, and will bear upon them the appalling mark of eternal reprobation. Their bodies will be incorruptible, and their senses intact, but only so as to suffer the everlasting torment of hell.

ARTICLE 12: *“And life everlasting. Amen.”*

1. What does the last or twelfth article of the Creed teach us?

The last article of the Creed teaches us that, after the present life there is another life, eternally happy for the blessed in Heaven, or eternally miserable for the damned in hell.

2. Can we comprehend the bliss of Heaven?

No, we cannot comprehend the bliss of Heaven, because it is beyond the scope of our limited minds, and because the goods of Heaven cannot be compared with the goods of this world.



Fig 1.12.1 If the earth is so beautiful, just imagine what Heaven must be like.

Saint Paul says: “Eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

3. In what does the happiness of the blessed consist?

The happiness of the blessed consists in forever seeing God “face to face,” and in loving and possessing Him. (CCC 1023)

4. In what does the misery of the damned consist?

The misery of the damned consists in being forever deprived of the vision of God and punished with eternal torments in hell.

5. How do we know that a good and merciful God will punish wicked souls with an everlasting punishment?

We know that the pains of hell are everlasting because it was Jesus Christ Himself Who said so: “Then He shall also say to those who shall be at His left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into **everlasting fire**, which was prepared for the devil and his angels' ... These shall go into **everlasting punishment**, but the just shall go into everlasting life” (Matt 25:41, 46). Although God is good and merciful, He is also just. Therefore, those who think that there is no hell, or that there is no everlasting punishment, are deluding themselves. Hell is just as real as Heaven is. (CCC 1035)

6. Are the happiness of Heaven and the miseries of hell for the soul alone?

At present the happiness of Heaven and the miseries of hell are for the soul alone, because at present only the souls of those who have died are in Heaven or in hell. But after the resurrection of the body when the souls are again united to the body, man in the fullness of his nature, that is, body and soul, will be forever happy in Heaven or forever tormented in hell.

7. Shall the bliss of Heaven and the miseries of hell be the same for all men?

The bliss of Heaven in the case of the blessed, and the miseries of hell in the case of the damned, will be the same in substance and in everlasting duration; but in measure or degree, they will be greater or less according to the extent of each one's merits or demerits in their earthly life.

8. Do souls which die in mortal sin go straight to hell?

Yes, souls that are in the state of mortal sin are cast right away into hell. (CCC 1033-1034)

9. Do souls with no unforgiven mortal sin go straight to Heaven?

Most souls, even though they have no unforgiven mortal sins, will need to pass through purgatory to suffer the temporal punishments due to sin, and to undergo a process of purification by which all evil inclinations and worldly attachments of the soul are removed, before they go to Heaven. (CCC 1030-1031)

10. What does the word “Amen” signify at the end of the Apostles’ Creed?

The word “Amen” at the end of a prayer signifies “so be it.” But at the end of the Apostles’ Creed it signifies and confirms what was said in the beginning of the Creed: “I believe...” Therefore, the Amen of the Apostles’ Creed means, “So it is my faith, and all things contained in these twelve articles are what I hold and firmly believe to be true.” (CCC 1064)

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Fig 1 Madonna and Child

Artist: Giovanni Battista Salvi da Sassoferrato (1609-1685)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sassoferrato_-_Jungfrun_i_b%C3%B6n.jpg

Fig 1.0.1 The Holy Scripture

Free photo by mmi9 from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/photos/bible-book-christian-holy-reading-1108074/>

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Artist: Possibly Cesare Fracanzano (1605-1651) of the Neapolitan School of Painting

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ignatius_of_Antiochie.jpg

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Artist: Unknown

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madonna_catacomb.jpg

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Product of Demetz Art Studio Italian Statuary

<https://www.churchsupplies.com/store/twelve-apostles-statues-500-1-12.shtml>

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Science Classroom poster on Amazon.com.

<https://www.amazon.com/Educational-Science-Butterfly-Poster-Chart/dp/B06XYJBK9M>

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An illustration from Bishop Louis LaRavoire Morrow's *My Catholic Faith*, 1963, p. 30

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Artist: Eustache Le Sueur (1616-1655)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eustache_Le_Sueur_-_The_Creation_of_the_World.jpg

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<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/angel-singing-choral-christmas-1004111/>

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Artist: Guido Reni (1575-1642)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Guido_Reni_031.jpg

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Raphael.JPG

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Artist: Filippo Tarchiani (1576-1645)

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From Adolf Hult, Bible Primer, Old Testament, Published by the Augustana Synod, 1919, p. 10

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Artist: Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727-1804)

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/thomashawk/49817517242/in/album-72157709381600857/>

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By Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

<https://www.rawpixel.com/image/262058/free-illustration-image-angel-annunciation-antique>

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Artists: O.A. Stemler and Bess Bruce Cleaveland

An illustration from Lillie A. Faris, *Standard Bible Story Readers*, Book One, 1925, p. 76.

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Artists: O.A. Stemler and Bess Bruce Cleaveland

An illustration from Lillie A. Faris, *Standard Bible Story Readers*, Book One, 1925, p. 36.

Fig 1.3.2 The Assumption of Mary

Artist: Guido Reni (1575-1642)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Assumption_of_Virgin_Mary_by_Guido_Reni_\(1638-9\)_-_Alte_Pinakothek_-_Munich_-_Germany_2017.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Assumption_of_Virgin_Mary_by_Guido_Reni_(1638-9)_-_Alte_Pinakothek_-_Munich_-_Germany_2017.jpg)

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Artist: Hans von Aachen (1552-1615)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_von_Aachen_Marienkrönung.jpg

Fig 1.4.1 Instruments of Christ's Passion

Pendant 3 3/16" x 2 1/2," circa 17th century, containing the emblems of the passion
From the Metropolitan Museum of Art

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/197103>

Fig 1.4.2 Christ Crucified between Two Thieves

A watercolor painting by James Jacques Tissot (1836-1902)

Brooklyn Museum

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Death_of_Jesus_\(La_mort_de_Jésus\)_-_James_Tissot.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Death_of_Jesus_(La_mort_de_Jésus)_-_James_Tissot.jpg)

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A painting by Giovanni Battista della Rovere (1560-1627)

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An illustration in a Portuguese catechism of 1910

<http://www.sendarium.com/p/catecismo-ilustrado-de-1910.html>, #8

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A painting by Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834-1890)

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Artists: O.A. Stemler and Bess Bruce Cleaveland

An illustration from Lillie A. Faris, *Standard Bible Story Readers*, Book Two, 1925, p. 143

Fig 1.6.2 Christ Seated at the Right Hand of the Father

An illustration in a Portuguese catechism of 1910

<http://www.sendarium.com/p/catecismo-ilustrado-de-1910.html>, #11

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An illustration in a Portuguese catechism of 1910

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Fig 1.8.2 Descent of the Holy Spirit as Tongues of Fire

Artist: Matthys Voet (circa 1600 +)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Matthys_Voet_-_Mysteries_of_the_Rosary,_Pentecost.jpeg

Fig 1.8.3 The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

<https://www.catholicfaithstore.com/daily-bread/blog/page/11/>

Note: There is a Pinterest button near the image, indicating that the image may be shared for non-commercial use.

Fig 1.9.1 St. Peter's Basilica in Rome (near the Tiber river)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Saint_Peter%27s_Basilica,_Sant%27Angelo_bridge,_by_night,_Rome,_Italy.jpg

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Fig 1.9.3 Christ Made St. Peter Head of the Church

Artists: O.A. Stemler and Bess Bruce Cleaveland

An illustration from Lillie A. Faris, *Standard Bible Story Readers*, Book Five, 1928, p. 109

Fig 1.9.4 Christ and the 12 Apostles

Artist Unknown

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Fig 1.9.5 Christ Promised to Send the Holy Spirit

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<https://ia803006.us.archive.org/7/items/OldBiblePicturesSmaller/42EE1202-4F9A-4615-94F7-29CDE29759D0.jpeg>

Fig 1.9.6 St. Peter, the first Pope of the Catholic Church

Artist: Paolo Emilio Besenzi (1608-1656)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Peter_Besenzi.jpg

Fig 1.9.7 The Communion of Saints

An illustration in a Portuguese catechism of 1910

<http://www.sendarium.com/p/catecismo-ilustrado-de-1910.html>, #15

Fig 1.9.8 Diagram of the Communion of Saints

An illustration from Bishop Louis LaRavoire Morrow's *My Catholic Faith*, 1963, p. 159

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Artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

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Artist: Ludovico Carracci (1555-1619)

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An illustration from Bishop Louis LaRavoire Morrow's *My Catholic Faith*, 1963, p. 170

Fig 1.12.1 If the earth is so beautiful, just imagine what Heaven must be like

Canadian Rockies in the Morning

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My Free Catechism

Book Two: The Sacraments

By Mr. Romeo Maria del Santo Niño, O.P.

Nihil Obstat:

Reverend Kevin J. Bobbin
Ad hoc Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
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Given this 16th day of September, 2020 at the Chancery of the Diocese of Allentown.



Reverend Eugene P. Ritz
Chancellor

Alfred A. Schlert

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
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This catechism is divided into four books; namely, Book One: *The Apostle's Creed*, Book Two: *The Sacraments*, Book Three: *The Commandments*, and Book Four: *Prayer and Christian Perfection*. The books are available in the form of pdf files that may be copied, shared, printed on paper or uploaded to children's mobile devices, iPods or computer tablets.

I did not write this catechism from scratch. To save time I made use of the questions and answers from old catechisms in the public domain, particularly the *Catechism of St. Pius X*. However, I edited, expanded and updated many of the texts to reflect current Church teachings. Color texts and illustrations, which are missing in old catechisms, were added to make the book attractive to young readers.

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External references in the texts, such as references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) or to the *1983 Code of Canon Law* (CIC), are added mainly for the use of parents or teachers who are coaching the children in learning this catechism. However, it is hoped that through the reading of select paragraphs of the CCC, many will be encouraged to read the entire book and profit from its wealth of wisdom.

Biblical texts used in this catechism are mostly from the *Douay-Challoner Rheims* version which, because they are in the public domain, I have edited slightly just to make the English less archaic for contemporary readers. The final texts may be compared with the original text of the *Douay-Challoner-Rheims* version (link below).

Although I made this book as a lay Dominican, this book is my personal project and not the project of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic. Therefore, the ideas expressed are mine alone and do not represent the endorsement or position of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic or the Order of Preachers as a whole.

USEFUL LINKS

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM>

1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC – comes from the Latin title *Codex Iuris Canonici*)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html

Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism

<https://archive.org/details/AnecdotesAndExamplesIllustrating/page/n5/mode/2up>

Douay-Challoner-Rheims Bible (public domain)

<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>

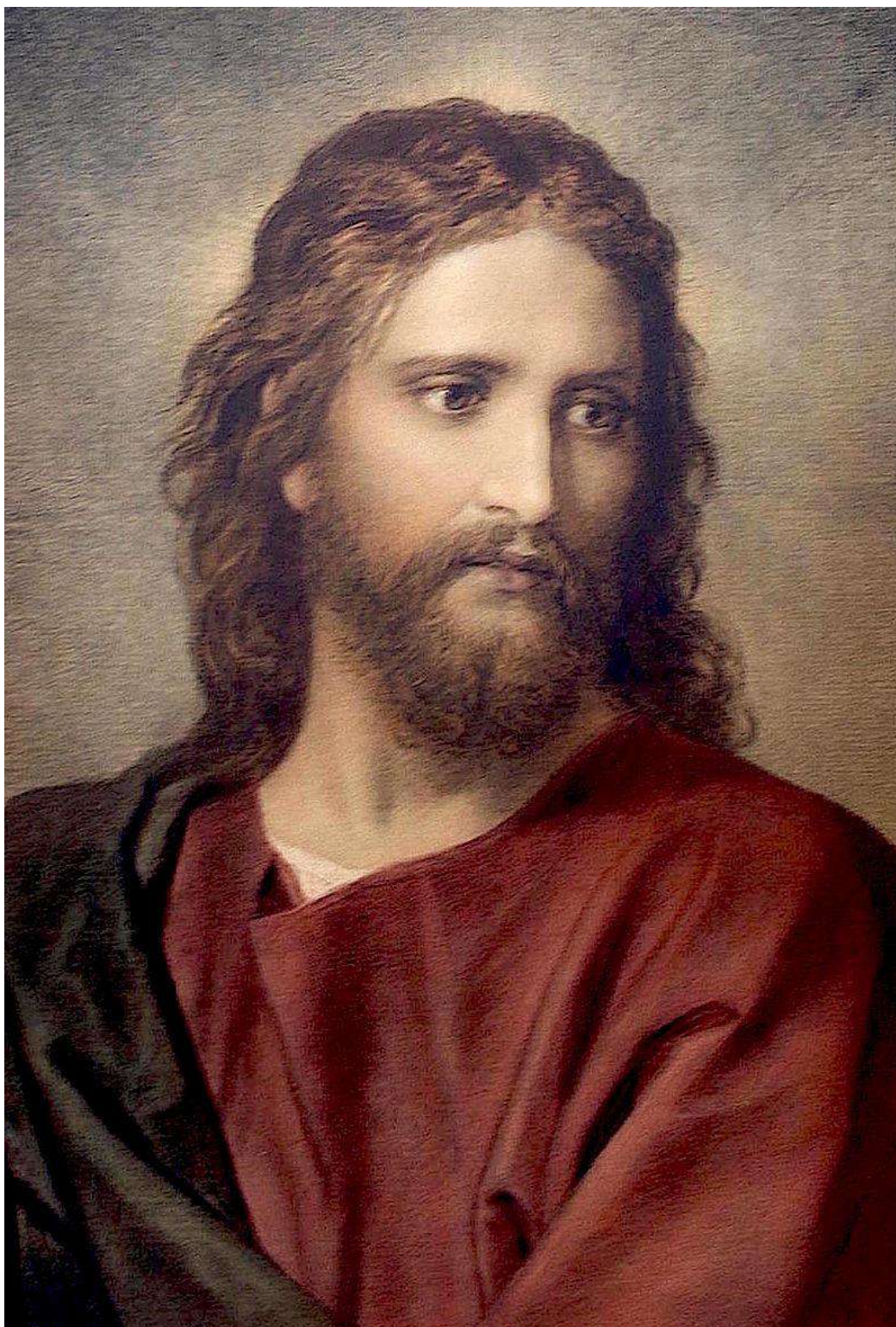


Fig 2 Portrait of Jesus Christ
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PART 2 THE SACRAMENTS

NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. What is treated of in the second part of this catechism?

The second part of this catechism (Book Two) treats of the sacraments.

2. What is meant by the word “sacrament”?

By the word “sacrament” is meant a sensible and efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ to sanctify our souls. (CCC 1114)

3. Why do you call the sacraments sensible and efficacious signs of grace?

The sacraments are called sensible and efficacious signs of grace because they signify by means of sensible things, the divine grace which they produce in our souls. In Baptism, for example, the pouring of water on the head of the person, and the words, “I baptize thee,” that means, I wash thee, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” are a sensible sign of that which Baptism accomplishes in the soul. Just as water washes the body, so in like manner does the grace given in Baptism cleanse the soul from sin.

4. How many sacraments are there, and what are they called?

There are seven sacraments; namely (CCC 1113):

1. Baptism
2. Confirmation
3. Eucharist
4. Reconciliation (or Penance)
5. Anointing of the Sick (or Extreme Unction)
6. Holy Orders
7. Matrimony.



Fig 2.0.1 Illustration of the Seven Sacraments

Top row: Baptism and Confirmation

Middle row: Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

Bottom row: Holy Orders and Matrimony

5. Why are there seven sacraments?

There are seven sacraments because they meet the seven spiritual needs that correspond with the seven bodily needs of our natural life. (CCC 1210)

- a. In our natural life we need first to be born. To this **Baptism** corresponds, by which we are spiritually “born again” as children of God.
- b. Next, we need to grow physically and be strong in order to mature. To this need in our spiritual life corresponds the Sacrament of **Confirmation**, by which we are made spiritually strong and perfect Christians.
- c. Then we need food to eat and nourish our bodies, and to this corresponds the **Eucharist** as the food of our souls.
- d. Of course we also need healing whenever we get sick or wounded. To this necessity corresponds the Sacrament of **Reconciliation**, which heals our souls whenever we get spiritually wounded or sick by sin.
- e. We also need help when we are seriously sick or dying. To this corresponds the sacrament, called **Anointing of the Sick**, which gives our souls special help against the assaults of the devil during our critical illnesses and in our last moments.
- f. In our natural life we also need officers and governors to regulate and maintain order in civil society. To this necessity corresponds **Holy Orders**, which gives us deacons, priests and bishops who rule and govern the things that pertain to our spiritual life.
- g. Finally our natural life requires us to multiply and populate our cities, and to this the Sacrament of **Matrimony** corresponds, by which marriage becomes sacramental and productive of future citizens of our Heavenly City.

6. What is necessary to constitute a sacrament?

To constitute a sacrament, it is necessary to have the *matter*, the *form*, and the *minister*, who must have the intention to do what the Catholic Church does.

7. What is the matter of the sacraments?

The *matter* of the sacraments is the material, sensible thing or *action* used in effecting the sacrament; such as natural water in Baptism, or the imposition of hands in Holy Orders.

8. What is the form of the sacraments?

The *form* of the sacraments is the formula of words which are pronounced in order to effect the sacrament. In Baptism, for example, the minister would say, “I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” That is the form or formula of the Sacrament of Baptism.

9. Who is the minister of the sacraments?

The *minister* of the sacraments is the person who administers or confers the sacrament. In Baptism, for example, the minister is ordinarily a priest or a deacon.

PRINCIPAL EFFECT OF THE SACRAMENTS: GRACE

10. What is grace?

Grace is an inward and supernatural gift given to us without any merit of our own, but solely through the merits of Jesus Christ, in order to gain eternal life.

11. How is grace distinguished?

Grace is divided into sanctifying grace, which is also called habitual grace, and actual grace.

12. What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift inherent in our soul, and rendering us just, adopted children of God and heirs to Heaven.

13. How many kinds of sanctifying grace are there?

Sanctifying grace is of two kinds: first grace and second grace.

14. What is first grace?

First grace is that sanctifying grace by means of which one passes from the state of mortal sin to the state of grace.

15. Which sacraments confer first grace?

The sacraments which confer first sanctifying grace, and change our soul from a state of sin to a state of grace, are two: Baptism and Reconciliation. These two sacraments are, on that account, called **sacraments of the dead**, because they are instituted chiefly to restore the life of grace to a soul that is spiritually dead by sin.

16. What is second grace?

Second grace is that sanctifying grace that confers an *increase* of grace in those who are already in a state of grace.

17. Which are the sacraments that increase grace in those who already possess it?

The sacraments which increase grace in those who already possess it are the other five: Confirmation, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony, all of which confer second grace. These five sacraments are, on that account, called **sacraments of the living**, because those who receive them must be free from mortal sin, that is, they must already be spiritually alive by being in the state of grace.

18. Does a person sin when he, conscious that he is not in a state of grace, receives one of the sacraments of the living?

Yes, he who receives one of the sacraments of the living, while he is conscious that he is not in the state of grace, commits a serious sin of sacrilege. Therefore, it is good practice to go to confession first, and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, before receiving any of these five sacraments: Confirmation, Eucharist, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony.

19. What is actual grace?

Actual grace is a supernatural gift which enlightens the mind, moves and strengthens the will to enable us to do good and avoid evil.

20. Can we resist the grace of God?

Yes, we can resist the grace of God because grace does not destroy our free will.

21. By the aid of our own powers alone can we do anything to attain everlasting life?

Without the grace of God, and by our own powers alone, we cannot do anything helpful to attain everlasting life.

22. How is grace given us by God?

Sanctifying grace is given us by God chiefly through the sacraments. Actual grace may be obtained through prayer or through the performance of good works, such as the works of mercy.

23. Do the sacraments confer any other grace besides sanctifying grace?

Besides sanctifying grace, the sacraments also confer sacramental grace proper to each sacrament. (CCC 1129)

24. What does sacramental grace do?

Sacramental grace confers the right to receive the actual graces necessary to fulfill the obligations arising from the sacrament received. Thus, when we were baptized we also received the right to receive the actual graces we need to live a Christian life.

25. Do the sacraments always confer grace on those who receive them?

The sacraments always confer grace provided they are received with the necessary and proper dispositions. (CCC 1131)

26. Who gave to the sacraments the power of conferring grace?

Jesus Christ by His passion and death gave to the sacraments the power of conferring grace. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the source of all graces. (CCC 1116) Since the sacraments derive their efficacy from Christ, they confer grace by the fact that they are performed or celebrated, *independently of the righteousness or holiness of the minister* celebrating the sacrament. (CCC 1128, 1584)

27. What sacraments are most necessary for salvation?

The sacraments most necessary for salvation are two: Baptism and Reconciliation. Baptism is necessary to remove original sin, and Reconciliation is necessary to all who have sinned mortally after Baptism. But, while Baptism and Reconciliation are the most necessary for salvation, they are not the greatest.

28. What is the greatest of all the sacraments?

The greatest of all the sacraments is the Eucharist, because it contains not only grace, but also Jesus Christ, the Author of grace and of the sacraments.

THE CHARACTER IMPRESSED BY SOME OF THE SACRAMENTS

29. What sacraments can be received only once?

The sacraments that can be received only once are three: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. These sacraments can be received only once because each of them imprints an *indelible* mark or “seal” on the soul that is never effaced. The character that they imprint on the soul marks us as members of Jesus Christ at Baptism, as His soldiers at Confirmation, and as His ministers at Holy Orders. (CCC 1121)

30. Is it a sin to receive these sacraments more than once?

Yes. It is a mortal sin of sacrilege.

SACRAMENTALS

31. What are the so-called “sacramentals”?

Sacramentals are blessed objects and rituals instituted by the Church for purposes of divine worship. Examples of sacramental objects are blessed rosaries, scapulars, medals, statues, crucifixes, holy water, holy cards, an altar, religious habits and vestments (clothing used by ministers and altar servers), holy candles, incense or any other religious object consecrated for purposes of divine worship. A chapel, a church, a convent, or any building dedicated for purposes of divine worship, is also a sacramental. But sacramentals are not limited to *objects* or *things*, for they also include the *actions* and *rituals* themselves by which a minister invokes the blessing of God upon people and things. For example, the gestures and formula of words used by a minister to bless a rosary, a car, a house, a new-born child, or the remains of the departed, are also sacramentals. (CCC 1667, 1671-1672)



Fig 2.0.2 Sacramentals

32. But why are these blessed objects and rituals called “sacramentals”?

They are so-called because they bear a resemblance to the sacraments in the fact that they are also signs of something sacred.

33. How do sacramentals exactly differ from the sacraments?

First of all, sacramentals are instituted by the Church, while sacraments are instituted by Christ. Secondly, although sacramentals are signs of something sacred, they do not confer divine grace as the sacraments do. The sacraments really confer the grace that they signify. For example, the Sacrament of Baptism is not merely a sign of the cleansing of a soul, but it actually cleanses the soul of the person being baptized, of original and actual sin, if there be any. A sacramental, such as holy water, does not of itself forgive sin, not even venial sin, but it inclines a person to pious acts that lead to the forgiveness of sin. Thus, St. Thomas Aquinas says that, although holy water of itself does not confer grace and wash away sin, the pious *use* of holy water, or the act of devotion and piety that go along with the use of holy water, is enough to forgive venial sin. (CCC 1670)

34. How should we use sacramentals?

We should use sacramentals with faith and devotion, and not treat them like objects of superstition. For instance, we should not wear a crucifix or a medal as if it were a “good luck charm.” (CCC 1676)

LESSON 1 BAPTISM

NATURE AND EFFECTS OF BAPTISM

1. What is the Sacrament of Baptism?

Baptism is a sacrament by which we are freed from sin (original and actual) and incorporated into the Church.

2. What are the effects of the Sacrament of Baptism?

The Sacrament of Baptism confers first sanctifying grace by which original sin is washed away, as well as any actual sin committed before Baptism. It also remits all punishment due on account of such sins; it imprints the indelible character of a Christian; it makes us children of God, members of the Catholic Church and heirs to Paradise, and enables us to receive the other sacraments. Indeed, Baptism is called the first sacrament because we cannot receive any other sacrament before it. (CCC 1213)

3. What is the matter of Baptism?

The **matter** of Baptism is natural water which is poured on the head of the person to be baptized in such a quantity as to flow.

4. What is the form of Baptism?

The **form** or formula of Baptism is: *"I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* The whole formula must be pronounced because the Baptism is not valid if the words "I baptize you" or any of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity be omitted.

5. When did Christ give the form of Baptism and the command to baptize?

Before He ascended into Heaven He said, "Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit ..." (Matt 28:19).

MINISTER OF BAPTISM

6. To whom does it belong to confer Baptism?

The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishops, priests and, in the Latin Church, also the deacons, but in case of necessity any person, whether man or woman, even a heretic or an infidel, can administer it, provided he performs the rite of Baptism using the correct formula, and has the intention of doing what the Church does in baptizing (CCC 1256).

7. If it were necessary to baptize a person in danger of death, and if several people were present, who should administer the sacrament?

If it were necessary to baptize a person in danger of death, and if several people were present, a priest, if such were at hand, should administer the sacrament, and, in his absence, a deacon; and in the absence of such, “any member of the faithful, indeed any person who has the requisite intention, can and sometimes must administer Baptism” (*Rite of Baptism*, General Introduction, #16).

8. What intention should the person baptizing, have?

The person baptizing should have the intention of doing what the Holy Catholic Church does in baptizing.

THE RITE OF BAPTISM

9. How is Baptism given?

Baptism is given by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized – and if it cannot be poured on the head, then on some other principal part of the body – saying at the same time: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” If the person to be baptized is an infant, then the sponsors, called godfather and/or godmother, usually hold the infant at the baptismal font.

In the Catholic Church Baptism is performed most expressively by triple **immersion** of the candidate in water. However, the ancient practice of simply pouring water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, is also very common. (CCC 1239-1243)



Fig 2.1.1 Infant Baptism

10. If one were to pour the water and another to pronounce the words, would the person be baptized?

If one poured the water and another said the words, the person would not be baptized, because it is necessary that the person who pours the water should pronounce the words.

11. When in doubt whether the person is dead, is it right to omit baptizing him?

When in doubt whether the person is dead, he should be baptized conditionally, saying: "If you are alive I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

12. When should infants be brought to the church to be baptized?

Infants should be brought to the church to be baptized **as soon as possible.**

13. Why such anxiety to have infants receive Baptism?

There should be the greatest anxiety to have infants baptized because, on account of their tender age, they are exposed to many dangers of death. And without the assurance afforded by Baptism, the salvation of the child is entirely up to God's mercy.

14. Do parents sin, then, who, through negligence, allow their children to die without Baptism, or who defer it?

Yes, fathers and mothers who, through negligence, allow their children to die without Baptism may be guilty of grievous sin, because they risk their children to be deprived of eternal life. They may also sin grievously by putting off Baptism for a long time, because they expose them to the risk of dying without having received it. (CCC 1250-1251)

15. When the person who is being baptized is an adult, what dispositions should he have?

An adult who is being baptized, should have, besides faith, true sorrow, even if it be imperfect, for the mortal sins he may have committed. He would not need to go to confession because his mortal sins will be wiped out along with the original sin by the Sacrament of Baptism. However, he needs to have true sorrow for his sins.

16. If an adult in mortal sin was baptized without such sorrow, what would he receive?

If an adult was baptized in mortal sin without such sorrow he would receive the character of Baptism, but not the remission of his sins nor sanctifying grace. And these two effects would be suspended, until the obstacle is removed by perfect contrition or by the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Fig 2.1.2 The Baptism of Christ

The Picture shows Christ being baptized by St. John the Baptist

NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

17. Is Baptism necessary to salvation?

Baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, for our Lord has expressly said: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

18. Can the effects of Baptism be supplied in any other way?

The effects of Baptism can be supplied in other ways:

1. By martyrdom, which is called **Baptism of Blood**. This is received by an unbaptized person who dies for the cause of Christianity or for the love of Christ. (CCC 1258)
2. By an act of explicit desire to be baptized and, hence, is called **Baptism of Desire**. This is received by an unbaptized person who has shown an explicit desire to be baptized, such as a catechumen who is preparing for Baptism, but who dies before actually receiving the sacrament. (CCC 1259)
3. By an act of sincere desire to love and serve God, and this is called **Baptism of Implicit Desire**. This is received by those who are ignorant of the Gospel, but who seek the truth and do the will of God according to their understanding of it. It may be presumed that such people would have wanted to be baptized explicitly had they known about it. (CCC1260)
4. By God's mercy. The Catholic Church entrusts the salvation of unbaptized children, or infants who have died without Baptism, to God's mercy. (CCC 1261)

19. If Baptism is necessary to salvation, then why are the effects of Baptism supplied in so many ways other than by Baptism?

Because God can make exceptions to His rule. *"God has bound salvation to the Sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments"* (CCC 1257). This is the reason why the Church recognizes that even unbaptized infants may, through God's boundless mercy, be saved.

20. What obligations does the person baptized have?

The person baptized is obliged (1) to profess the faith and observe the Law of Jesus Christ and of His Church, and (2) to renounce the devil, and his works and pomps¹ forever. The devil craftily allures us by filling our minds with the maxims and ideals of the world that are contrary to the maxims and ideals of the Gospel.

NAMES AND SPONSORS

21. Why is the name of a saint frequently given to him who is being baptized?

To him who is being baptized is frequently given the name of a saint in order to put him under the protection of a heavenly patron and to encourage him to imitate that saint's example.

22. Can infants be baptized when they have no actual faith?

Yes, through the faith of the Church, and of their godparents.

23. Who are the godfathers and godmothers in Baptism?

The godfathers and godmothers in Baptism are those persons who, in accordance with the decree of the Catholic Church, hold the infants at the font, answer for them, and become guarantees in the sight of God for their Catholic education, especially in the absence of the parents. (CIC, can. 872)

24. Are we obliged to keep the promises and renunciations made for us by our sponsors?

We are certainly obliged to observe the promises and renunciations made for us by our sponsors, because it is only on this condition that God has received us into His grace.

¹ The so-called “pomps of the devil” refer to his empty promises by which he seduces us to do evil. Satan gave us an example of this when he offered Christ the glory of the whole world, if He would fall down and adore him. But Christ answered him saying: *The Lord your God shall you adore, and Him only shall you serve.* (Matt 4:8-10).

25. What sort of persons should be chosen as godfathers and godmothers?

The persons who should be chosen as godfathers and godmothers should be practicing Catholics, conscientious of, and obedient to, the laws of God and of the Church.

26. What are the obligations of godfathers and godmothers?

Godfathers and godmothers are bound to see that their spiritual children are instructed in the truths of faith and live as good Catholics, should parents be negligent or be prevented by illness or death to fulfill their duties. (CCC 1255)

LESSON 2 CONFIRMATION

1. What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

Confirmation is a sacrament which gives us the Holy Spirit, imprints on our souls the mark of a soldier of Jesus Christ, and helps us to become perfect Christians.

2. How does the Sacrament of Confirmation help us to become perfect Christians?

The Sacrament of Confirmation helps us to become perfect Christians by strengthening our faith and increasing the other virtues and gifts received in Baptism.

3. What gifts of the Holy Spirit are increased by Confirmation?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit increased by Confirmation are these seven: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord. (Read and review Book One, Art.8, for the definition of these gifts.)

4. When did our Lord institute this sacrament?

The time is not certain. However, we know that this is by divine institution, for St. Paul said, “Now he that confirms us with you in Christ and that has anointed us, is God: Who also has sealed us and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor 1:21-22). And St. Paul himself confirmed twelve disciples after baptizing them: “Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them ...” (Acts 19:5-6).

5. What is the matter of this sacrament?

The **matter** of this sacrament, besides the imposition of hands by the bishop, is the anointing of the forehead with sacred chrism.

6. What is sacred chrism?

Sacred chrism is oil of olive mingled with balsam, and consecrated by the bishop on Holy Thursday. (CCC 1297)

7. What do the oil and balsam in this sacrament signify?

In this sacrament the oil, which is unctuous and strengthening, signifies the abounding grace which is diffused over the soul of the Christian to confirm him in his faith. The balsam, which is fragrant, signifies that the Christian, strengthened by this grace, is enabled to give forth the good odor of Christian virtue.

8. What is the form of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The **form** or formula of the Sacrament of Confirmation is this: "*Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" (CCC 1300, 1320)

9. Who is the minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The ordinary **minister** of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the bishop. A priest may be given the faculty to confer this sacrament, and is then called an *extraordinary minister* of Confirmation. (CCC 1313-1314)

10. How does the bishop administer Confirmation?

In administering the Sacrament of Confirmation the bishop first stretches his hands over those to be confirmed, and invokes the Holy Spirit upon them. Next, he anoints the forehead of each one with sacred chrism in the form of a cross, saying the words of the formula. Then he gives each one confirmed the sign of peace, saying, "Peace be with you." Finally, he solemnly blesses all those he has confirmed. (CCC 1299-1301)

11. Why is the anointing made on the forehead?

It has been suggested that the anointing is made on the forehead, where signs of fear and shame appear, in order that the person confirmed may understand that one should not blush at the name and profession of a Christian, nor fear the enemies of his faith.



Fig 2.2.1 Child being Confirmed by a Bishop

12. Is the Sacrament of Confirmation necessary?

Yes, it is morally necessary for the maturity of our Christian life so that, enriched by the strength of the Holy Spirit, we may act as true witnesses and soldiers of Jesus Christ, spreading and defend the faith by word and deed. (CCC 1285)

13. Should all endeavor to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation then?

Yes, all baptized persons not yet confirmed should endeavor to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and to have those under them receive it. (CCC 1306)

14. Does one sin not to receive it, when one might have it without great inconvenience?

Yes, and it is a mortal sin if it be avoided out of contempt, or omitted out of gross neglect, especially in a place or time of persecution. For, by neglecting to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, we expose ourselves to the great danger of denying our faith, against which this sacrament was especially instituted by our Lord.

15. At what age is the Sacrament of Confirmation recommended to be received?

In the U.S. the Bishops recommend that the age for Confirmation shall be from *the age of discretion* (around seven) to the age of sixteen, because the candidates also need to be properly instructed in the faith. Preparation for Confirmation should strive at awakening Christian maturity in the candidate and a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ. (CCC 1309)

16. What dispositions are required to receive worthily the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The Sacrament of Confirmation is one of the sacraments of the living. Therefore, to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation worthily it is necessary *to be in the state of grace*, know the

principal mysteries of our faith, have the right intention, and be ready to be a witness to Christ. To be assured of being in the state of grace at the time of confirmation, it is advisable that children go first to confession and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation a few days before receiving Confirmation. (CCC 1310, 1319)

17. Would he who receive Confirmation a second time be guilty of sin?

Yes, he would commit the grievous sin of sacrilege, because Confirmation is one of the sacraments that imprint a character on the soul and hence may be received only once.

18. What should a Christian do to preserve the grace of Confirmation?

To preserve the grace of Confirmation a Christian should pray often, do good works, and live according to the laws of Jesus Christ, in spite of human respect.

19. Why are there also godfathers and godmothers in Confirmation?

In order that, by word and example, they may show the confirmed the way to eternal life and help him in the spiritual combat against the devil. (CIC, can. 892)

20. What qualifications are required in sponsors?

They should be of proper age, Catholics, confirmed, instructed in the necessary truths of religion, and persons of good character. It is desirable that the same person who was the sponsor at the child's Baptism be the sponsor also at the child's Confirmation (CIC, cann. 874.1 and 893.2).

LESSON 3 HOLY EUCHARIST

THE NATURE OF THE EUCHARIST

1. What is the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is a sacrament in which, by the marvelous conversion of the whole substance of bread into the Body of Jesus Christ, and that of wine into His Precious Blood, is contained truly, really, and substantially, the Body, the Blood, the Soul and Divinity of the same Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine as our spiritual food.

2. In the Eucharist is there the same Jesus Christ who is in Heaven, and who was born on earth of the Blessed Virgin?

Yes, in the Eucharist there is truly the same Jesus Christ who is in Heaven, and who was born on earth of the Blessed Virgin.

3. Why do you believe that in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is really present?

I believe that in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is truly present, because He Himself said it, and Holy Catholic Church teaches it. This is what we read in the Gospel of St. Matthew: “While they were at supper, Jesus took bread, blessed, broke, and gave it to His disciples and said, ‘*Take and eat. This is My Body.*’ Taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of this, all of you. For *this is My Blood* of the new testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt 26:26-28). Did you read that well? He did not say, “This is the symbol of My Body,” nor “This represents My Blood.” What He said was, “This IS My Body... This IS My Blood.” In the Gospel of St. John He also made it clear that He was indeed talking of His real Flesh and Blood: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you” (John 6:54).

4. What is the *matter* of the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

The **matter** of the Sacrament of the Eucharist is that which was used by Jesus Christ Himself, that is, **wheat bread** and **grape wine**. (CCC 1412)

A small amount of water is also added in the chalice to signify the fact that blood and water flowed from the side of Christ when He was pierced by a lance (John 19:31-34).



Fig 2.3.1 Hosts made of Wheat Bread in the Bowls and Grape Wine in the Chalice

5. What is the *form* of the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

The essential **form** or formula of the Sacrament of the Eucharist consists of the words used by Jesus Christ Himself: "*This is My Body which will be given up for you ... This is the cup of My Blood...*" The complete formula is actually longer. (CCC 1412)

6. What is the host before consecration?

The host before consecration is just ordinary bread.

7. After consecration what is the Host?

After consecration the Host is the true Body of our Lord Jesus Christ under the sensible appearance of bread, that is, It is now the Body of Christ although It still looks and tastes like bread.

8. What is in the chalice before consecration?

In the chalice before consecration there is wine with a few drops of water.

9. After consecration what is in the chalice?

After consecration there is in the chalice the true Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the sensible appearance of wine, that is, It is now the Blood of Christ although It still looks and tastes like wine.

10. When does the change of the bread into the Body and of the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ take place?

The change of the bread into the Body and of the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ is made at the very moment in which the priest pronounces the words of consecration during Holy Mass.

11. What is the consecration?

The consecration is the renewal, by means of the priest, of the act of our Lord Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, by which He changed bread and wine into His Adorable Body and Blood by saying: "This is My Body ... This is My Blood."

12. What does the Church call this supernatural change of bread and of wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ?

The Catholic Church calls this supernatural change which is daily wrought upon our altars *transubstantiation*. (CCC 1376)



Fig 2.3.2 The Host is the Body of Jesus Christ after the Consecration

13. Who gave this great power to the words of consecration?

Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is Almighty God, gave this great power to the words of consecration.

14. Is there nothing left of the bread and of the wine after consecration?

After consecration the species and appearance of the bread and of the wine alone are left.

15. What are the “species” of the bread and of the wine?

By the “species” of the bread and of the wine is meant the quantity and sensible qualities of the bread and of the wine, such as their size, weight, shape, color and taste.

16. How can the species remain while the substance of bread and wine change into the Body and Blood of Christ?

The species of the bread and of the wine remain, while only their substances change by the power of Almighty God.

17. Under the species of the bread is there only the Body of Jesus Christ and under the species of the wine only His Blood?

No. Under the species of bread the **whole** Christ is present, not just His Body. And under the species of wine, the **whole** Christ is present, not just His Blood.

18. Why is Jesus Christ whole and entire both in the Host and in the Wine?

Because there cannot be a living body without a living blood, and vice versa. Both in the Host and in the Wine Jesus Christ is whole and entire, because He is living and immortal in the Eucharist as He is in Heaven. Therefore, where His Body is, there also are His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity; and where His Blood is, there also are His Body, His Soul and His Divinity, all these being inseparable in Jesus Christ. (CCC 1377)

19. When Jesus Christ is in the Host does He cease to be in Heaven?

When Jesus Christ is in the Host He does not cease to be in Heaven. He is physically in Heaven, sacramentally in the Host.

20. Is Jesus Christ present in all the consecrated Hosts in the world?

Yes, Jesus Christ is present in all consecrated Hosts in the world.

21. How can Jesus Christ be present in all the consecrated Hosts in the world?

Jesus Christ is present in all the consecrated Hosts in the world by the Power of God, to whom nothing is impossible.

22. When the Host is broken is the Body of Jesus Christ broken also?

When the Host is broken, the Body of Jesus Christ is not broken, but only the species and sensible appearance of the bread are broken.

23. In which part of the Host is the Body of Jesus Christ present?

The Body of Jesus Christ is wholly present in all the parts and particles of the Host.



Fig. 2.3.3 Jesus Christ is Present Wholly and Entirely in the Holy Eucharist

24. Is Jesus Christ just as much in a particle of a Host as in a whole Host?

Yes, the same Jesus Christ is just as much in a particle of a Host as in the whole Host.

25. Why is the Most Holy Eucharist preserved in our churches?

The Most Holy Eucharist is preserved in our churches so that It may be adored by the faithful, and brought to the sick when necessary.

26. Ought the Eucharist to be adored?

The Eucharist ought to be adored by all, because it contains really, truly, and substantially, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

27. Who is the ordinary minister of the Holy Eucharist?

The only person who has the power to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is an ordained priest or bishop. However, the ordinary minister for distributing Communion is an ordained bishop, priest, or deacon (CIC, can. 910.1).

28. Who are the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion?

The extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are Catholic lay persons who assist in the distribution of Holy Communion, either during the Mass, or afterwards, to sick people at home or in the hospital, or to the aged in nursing homes.

29. Who are the “Eucharistic ministers”?

The term “Eucharistic minister” broadly refers to anyone who distributes Holy Communion. Therefore, it applies to both the ordinary and the extraordinary ministers. If you want to refer exclusively to lay Catholics who assist in distributing Communion, you should use the term “extraordinary minister.”

THE INSTITUTION AND EFFECTS OF THE EUCHARIST

30. When did Jesus Christ institute the Sacrament of the Eucharist?

Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist during His last supper with His Apostles, when He said, “Do this for a commemoration of Me” (Luke 22:19). (CCC 1337-1344)

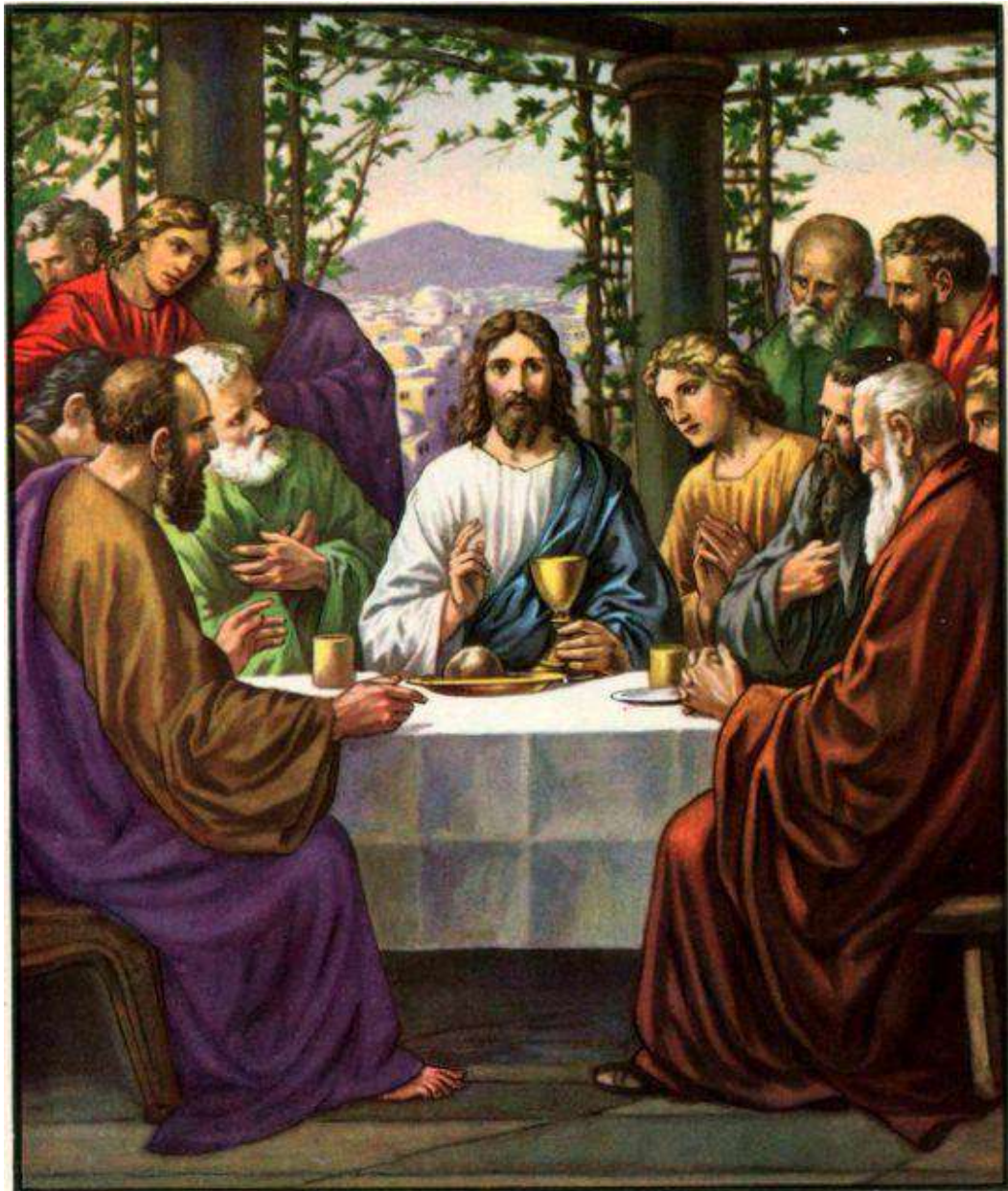


Fig 2.3.4 Christ instituted the Eucharist during His Last Supper with the Apostles

31. Why did Jesus Christ institute the Most Holy Eucharist?

Jesus Christ instituted the Most Holy Eucharist for three principal reasons: (1) To be the Sacrifice of the New Law; (2) To be the food of our souls; (3) To be a perpetual memorial of His passion and death and a precious pledge both of His love for us and of eternal life.

32. Why did Jesus Christ institute this sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine?

Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine, because the Eucharist, since it is intended to be our spiritual nourishment, it was fitting that it should be given to us under the form of food and drink.

33. What are the effects which the Most Holy Eucharist produces in us?

The principal effects which the Most Holy Eucharist produces in those who worthily receive it are these: (1) It increases our union with Christ; (2) It preserves and increases the life of the soul, which is grace, just as natural food sustains and increases the life of the body; (3) It remits venial sins and preserves us from mortal sin; (4) It unites us with all the faithful as one Mystical Body of Christ, the Church (CCC 1391-1396)

34. Does not the Most Holy Eucharist produce other effects in us?

Yes. The Most Holy Eucharist produces four other effects: (1) It weakens our passions; (2) It increases charity toward God and to our neighbor, especially the poor; (3) It promotes unity with other Christians; and (4) It gives us a pledge of future glory and of the resurrection of our body. (CCC 1397-1398, 1402)

DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION WORTHILY

35. Does the Sacrament of the Eucharist always produce its marvelous effects in us?

The Sacrament of the Eucharist produces its marvelous effects in us when it is received with the requisite dispositions.

36. What conditions are necessary to make a good Communion?

To make a good Communion three conditions are necessary:

1. To be in the state of grace;
2. To be fasting one hour before Holy Communion (CIC, can. 919); and
3. To know what we are about to receive, and to approach Holy Communion devoutly. Very young children, as well as those who have not been well instructed in their catechism, and who do not understand that what they receive in Holy Communion is the real Body of Christ, are not yet ready to receive Holy Communion, and should not join the Communion line.

37. What is meant by being in the state of grace?

To be in the state of grace means to have a pure conscience and to be free from mortal sin.

38. Does he who goes to Communion in mortal sin receive Jesus Christ?

He who goes to Communion in mortal sin receives Jesus Christ but not His grace. Also, he commits a sacrilege and renders himself deserving of the sentence of damnation. St. Paul says, “He that eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord” (1 Cor 11:29).

39. What should one who knows that he is in mortal sin do before receiving Communion?

One who knows that he is in mortal sin must make a good confession before going to Holy Communion, for even an act of perfect contrition is not enough without confession to enable one who is in mortal sin to receive Holy Communion properly.

If you know that you have a mortal sin, and you have not gone to confession, **STAY IN YOUR SEAT** when Communion time comes, and just make an “Act of Spiritual Communion.” You do not have to join the Communion line just because everybody else is going to Communion. It is better to remain seated than to commit another mortal sin of sacrilege! There are also other valid reasons for not joining the Communion line, such as failure to observe the Eucharistic fast, a bad cough, etc. Don’t think people will judge you if you cannot receive Communion at that time.

The **Act of Spiritual Communion** is said as follows:

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”

40. What sort of fast is required before Communion?

Before Communion there is required a one-hour natural fast which is broken by taking food or drink, except water and medicine. Chewing gum in church before Holy Communion breaks the Eucharistic fast and should be avoided. Although the requirement for Eucharistic fast is one hour *before* Communion, it is safer to stop taking food or drink (including chewing gum) one hour *before the Mass begins*, because this gives you a certain margin of error in case you miscalculate the time.

The elderly, the sick, and those who care for them are exempt from fasting and may receive Communion even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour.

41. If one were to swallow a particle that had remained between the teeth, might he still go to Communion?

If one were to swallow a particle that had remained between the teeth, he might still go to Communion because the particle is no longer regarded as food or has lost its character as food.

42. The third condition to make a good Communion is, “To know what we are about to receive.” What does this mean?

“To know what we are about to receive” means to know and firmly believe that what we are about to receive in Holy Communion is NOT ordinary bread nor wine, but the true Body or Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

43. What do the words, “To receive Holy Communion with devotion” mean?

“To receive Holy Communion with devotion” means to approach the sacrament with humility and modesty in person *and dress*; and to make a preparation before, and an act of thanksgiving after, Holy Communion.

44. In what does the preparation before Communion consist?

Preparation before Communion consists in meditating for some time on Whom we are about to receive, and on who we are; and in making acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, adoration, humility, and desire to receive Jesus Christ. Because of the short time available between the consecration and Holy Communion, it is good practice to come a few minutes early and start these preparations before the Mass begins.

45. In what does the thanksgiving after Communion consist?

Thanksgiving after Communion consists in keeping ourselves recollected in order to honor the Lord who is within us; renewing our acts of faith, of hope, of charity, of adoration, of thanksgiving, of offerings, and of requests, especially for those graces which are most necessary for ourselves and for those for whom we are bound to pray. Due to limited time after Communion, it is again good practice not to rush out of church immediately after Mass, but to stay behind a few minutes in church to give thanks to our Lord who so lovingly touched our souls.

46. What should we do during the day on which we have received Communion?

During the day on which we have received Communion we should remain as recollected as possible, occupy ourselves in works of piety, and discharge the duties of our state with greater diligence.

47. How long does Jesus Christ abide within us after Holy Communion?

After Holy Communion Jesus Christ abides within us by His Real Presence until the sacramental species are consumed or absorbed by the body, but He abides within us by His grace as long as we commit no mortal sin.

48. Is it necessary to receive Holy Communion in both species, bread and wine?

No, it is not necessary to receive Holy Communion in both species, since Christ is wholly present in either one. Ordinarily one receives only the consecrated Host; in special occasions (such as weddings) Communion is taken under both species. However, the priest celebrant is required to take Communion under both species always in order to manifest the meaning of the sacrament more fully.

THE WAY TO GO TO COMMUNION

49. Should we kneel or should we stand when receiving Holy Communion?

In the U.S. most people stand in line when they approach the priest or the Eucharistic minister to receive Holy Communion. Therefore, the U.S. Bishops decided that *communicants should remain standing* when they receive the Holy Eucharist.

Traditionally, however, Holy Communion is received on the tongue while kneeling as a form of reverence. This practice is still *recommended*, especially when there are few communicants or when there is no risk of being a tripping hazard to others as one receives Holy Communion.



Fig 2.3.5 Girl Receiving Communion

50. What form of reverence must be shown to the Holy Eucharist when receiving Holy Communion?

First, say your prayer (of adoration) before Holy Communion while still in the pew. Then kneel, if possible, when you receive Communion on the tongue. If you are receiving Holy Communion standing rather than kneeling, show reverence to our Lord by *bowing the head* before the Blessed Sacrament, and by saying “Amen” after the priest or minister says, “The Body of Christ.”



Fig 2.3.6 Boy Receiving Communion

51. Should Holy Communion be received in the hand or on the tongue?

In the U.S. receiving Holy Communion in the hand is *permitted*, but receiving Holy Communion on the tongue has been the traditional practice and is *recommended*.

52. How is Holy Communion received on the tongue?

When receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, open your mouth wide and *extend* your tongue out so the priest or minister can put the Host properly on your tongue. Do not be embarrassed to extend your tongue out. Many saints have done the same.

53. How is Holy Communion received in the hand?

When receiving Holy Communion in the hand and you are right handed, put your right hand under your left. When the priest puts the Host in your hand, pick it up with your right hand and put it in your mouth. If you are left handed, put your left hand under your right. When the priest puts the Host in your hand, pick it up with your left hand and put it in your mouth. Do not walk away with the Host in your hand. You **MUST** first put the sacred Host in your mouth *in the presence of the priest or minister* before walking back to your seat.

54. When should the Sacred Host be swallowed?

We should try to swallow the Sacred Host as soon as possible, and avoid spitting for some time. If the Host should cling to the palate, remove it with your tongue, but never with your finger.

55. What must you do after receiving Holy Communion?

After receiving Holy Communion, you should spend some time adoring our Lord, relishing His Divine Presence, thanking Him and saying your Prayer after Holy Communion. After the Mass and *throughout the day*, think of this great moment when our Lord Jesus came and gave you a “kiss” in your soul.

THE PRECEPT OF HOLY COMMUNION**56. When are we bound to receive Communion?**

The third precept of the Catholic Church requires that we go to Communion during the Easter time (CCC 2042). In the U.S. the Easter duty may be fulfilled from the First Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday. An Act of Spiritual Communion does not fulfill the precept.

57. At what age does the precept of Paschal Communion begin to bind?

The precept of Paschal Communion begins to bind as soon as a child is capable of receiving Communion with the requisite dispositions.

58. Do they sin who are old enough to observe the Easter duty and do not?

They who are old enough to observe the Easter duty and do not, either because they are unwilling, or because, through their own fault, they are not instructed, undoubtedly sin. Their parents or guardians also sin if the delay of Communion is owing to their fault, and they shall have to render a strict account to God for it.

59. Is it a good and useful thing to go to Communion often?

It is an excellent thing to go to Communion often, even daily, provided we do so with the requisite dispositions. In fact, we may receive Holy Communion *again on the same day*, but only at the Mass or celebration of the Eucharist in which we participate (CIC, can. 917). For example, if you attend Mass and receive Holy Communion on Saturday morning, and then you attend Mass for the Saturday evening Mass (to fulfill your Sunday obligation), then you may receive Holy Communion again, even if you already received one in the morning.

60. How long can you receive Holy Communion without first going to confession?

You can receive Holy Communion without going to confession as long as you remain free from mortal sin. However, for those who receive Holy Communion frequently or every Sunday, monthly confession is recommended, even if there are only venial sins to confess.

LESSON 4 RECONCILIATION

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION IN GENERAL

1. What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to remit the sins committed after Baptism.

2. Why is the name “reconciliation” given to this sacrament?

The name “reconciliation” is given to this sacrament because it aims to restore our friendship with God that we have lost by sin.

3. When did Jesus Christ institute the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation on the day of His Resurrection when, entering the Supper Room, He solemnly told His Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John 20:22).

4. What is the matter of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The **matter** of the Sacrament of Reconciliation consists of the sins committed by the penitent after Baptism, and the acts of the penitent himself, that is, *contrition*, *confession* and *satisfaction*.

Contrition or sorrow for sin is a grief of the soul leading us to detest sins committed and to resolve not to commit them anymore. (CCC 1451)

Confession is the disclosure of our sins to the priest, and consists in accusing ourselves of the sins we have committed in order to obtain absolution and receive penance for them. (CCC 1455-1456)

Satisfaction or penance is the reparation of damage caused by sin, which may include prayer or good work, which the confessor enjoins on the penitent in expiation of his sins. (CCC 1459-1460)

5. What is the form of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The **form** of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the formula of absolution spoken by the priest in remitting sin: *"I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."* See CCC 1449 for the complete formula.

6. Who is the minister of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The **minister** of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is the bishop, or a priest authorized by the bishop to hear confessions. (CCC 1461-1462)

7. Why do you say that a priest must be authorized by the bishop?

A priest must be authorized by the bishop to hear confessions because to administer this sacrament validly the power of Orders is not enough. The power of jurisdiction, that is, the power to judge, must also be given by the bishop.

8. Of all the parts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation which is the most necessary?

Of all the parts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation the most necessary is contrition, because without it no pardon for sins is obtainable, while with it alone, pardon can be obtained, provided that along with it there is at least an implicit desire of going to confession.



Fig 2.4.1 Confession

EFFECTS AND NECESSITY OF RECONCILIATION

9. Which are the effects of the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation confers sanctifying grace, restores our friendship with God, remits mortal sins, as well as venial sins which we confess and are sorry for. It changes eternal punishment into temporal punishment, and remits temporal punishment more or less according to our dispositions. It reconciles us with the Church and re-establishes our communion with the saints that has been damaged by sin. Reconciliation also gives the soul aid in due time against falling into sin again, and it restores peace of conscience. (CCC 1468-1469)

10. Is the Sacrament of Reconciliation necessary to all for salvation?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is necessary for salvation to all who have committed a mortal sin after Baptism.

11. Is it a good thing to go to confession often?

Yes, it is an excellent thing to go to confession often even if there are only venial sins to confess, because the Sacrament of Reconciliation, besides taking away sin, also gives the graces necessary to avoid sin in the future. For those who receive Holy Communion every Sunday, monthly confession is highly recommended. For those who are conscious of having committed a mortal sin, confession is necessary before Communion, and is therefore recommended to be done at the soonest possible time.

12. Has the Sacrament of Reconciliation the power of remitting all sins, no matter how numerous or how great they are?

The Sacrament of Reconciliation has the power of remitting all sins no matter how numerous and great they are, provided it is received with the requisite dispositions.

13. How many conditions are necessary to make a good confession?

To make a good confession five things are necessary:

1. Examination of conscience;
2. Sorrow for having offended God;
3. A resolution of sinning no more;
4. Confession of sins; and
5. Satisfaction or penance.

14. What should we do first of all to make a good confession?

To make a good confession we should first of all earnestly beseech God to give us the light to know all our sins and the strength of will to detest them.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

15. What is the examination of conscience?

The examination of conscience is a diligent soulful search for the sins committed since the last good confession. We should examine our conscience not only with respect to the Ten Commandments and the Precepts of the Church, but also in the light of the Word of God, such as Matt 5-7 and Rom 12-15. (CCC 1454)

16. How is the examination of conscience made?

The examination of conscience is made by carefully calling to mind before God all the sins committed but not confessed, in thought, word, deed and omission, against the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church, the Beatitudes and other maxims of the Gospel.

17. On what else should we examine ourselves?

We should also examine ourselves on our bad habits and on the occasions of sin.

18. What is required for a sin to be mortal?

For a sin to be mortal three things are required:

1. Grave matter,
2. Full knowledge, and
3. Perfect consent of the will.

The matter is grave when the thing under examination is seriously contrary to the laws of God and His Church.

There is full knowledge in sinning when we know perfectly well that what we are doing is a serious evil.

There is perfect consent of the will in sinning when we deliberately determine to do a thing although we fully know that thing to be sinful.

19. What diligence should be used in the examination of conscience?

In the examination of conscience, the same diligence is to be applied as in any matter of great importance.

20. How much time should be spent in the examination of conscience?

More or less time should be spent in the examination of conscience according to the needs of each case, that is, according to the number and kind of sins that burden the conscience and according to the time that has elapsed since the last good confession.

21. How may the examination of conscience be rendered easy?

The examination of conscience is rendered easy by making an examination of conscience *every evening* upon the actions of the day.

SORROW FOR SIN

22. What is sorrow for sin?

Sorrow for sin consists in grief of soul and in a sincere detestation of the offence made against God.

23. How many kinds of sorrow are there?

Sorrow is of two kinds: perfect sorrow and imperfect sorrow.

24. What is perfect sorrow?

Perfect sorrow, also known as *contrition*, is a grief of soul that arises from having broken our relationship with God who is infinitely good and worthy of being loved for His own sake.

25. Why is perfect sorrow or contrition called perfect?

Perfect sorrow or contrition is called perfect for two reasons: (1) Because it considers the goodness of God alone and not the loss of Heaven or the pains of hell; (2) Because it enables us at once to obtain pardon for sins, even though the obligation to confess them still remains. (CCC 1452)

26. Perfect sorrow, then, obtains us pardon of our sins independently of confession?

Perfect sorrow or contrition does not obtain us pardon of our sins independently of confession because it always includes the intention to confess them. However, perfect sorrow can obtain pardon and restore us to grace at once because it proceeds from charity which cannot exist in the soul together with sin.

27. What is imperfect sorrow?

Imperfect sorrow, also known as *attrition*, is that by which we repent of having offended God, not because He is infinitely good and deserving of our love, but for fear of hell or the punishment deserved in this life or in the life to come, or because of the very foulness of sin itself. (CCC 1453)

28. What qualities must sorrow have to be true sorrow?

In order to be true, sorrow must have four qualities: It must be *internal, supernatural, supreme* and *universal*. True sorrow, be it perfect or imperfect, must have these four qualities:

Internal – that means, it must exist in the heart and will, and not in words alone.

Supernatural – that means, it must be excited in us by supernatural motives that come from faith, rather than purely natural and human motives. For example, if we are sorry for the sin of stealing only because we were caught committing it, and we fear going to jail or suffering temporal penalties that would be imposed by the law, then our motive is purely natural and human. But if we are sorry because we believe on faith that stealing is against one of God's commandments, and that by stealing we lose sanctifying grace and our friendship with God, and that we deserve the fires of hell, then our motive comes from our faith and is supernatural.

Supreme – that means, it must move us to hate sin as the greatest of all evils, being as it is an offence against God. For our sorrow to be supreme, it is not necessary to shed tears of sorrow, but in our heart we must regard having broken our relationship with God as worse than any other misfortune whatsoever.

Universal – that means, it must extend to *every* mortal and venial sin committed. He who has four mortal sins but is sorry for only three of them still remains an enemy to God.

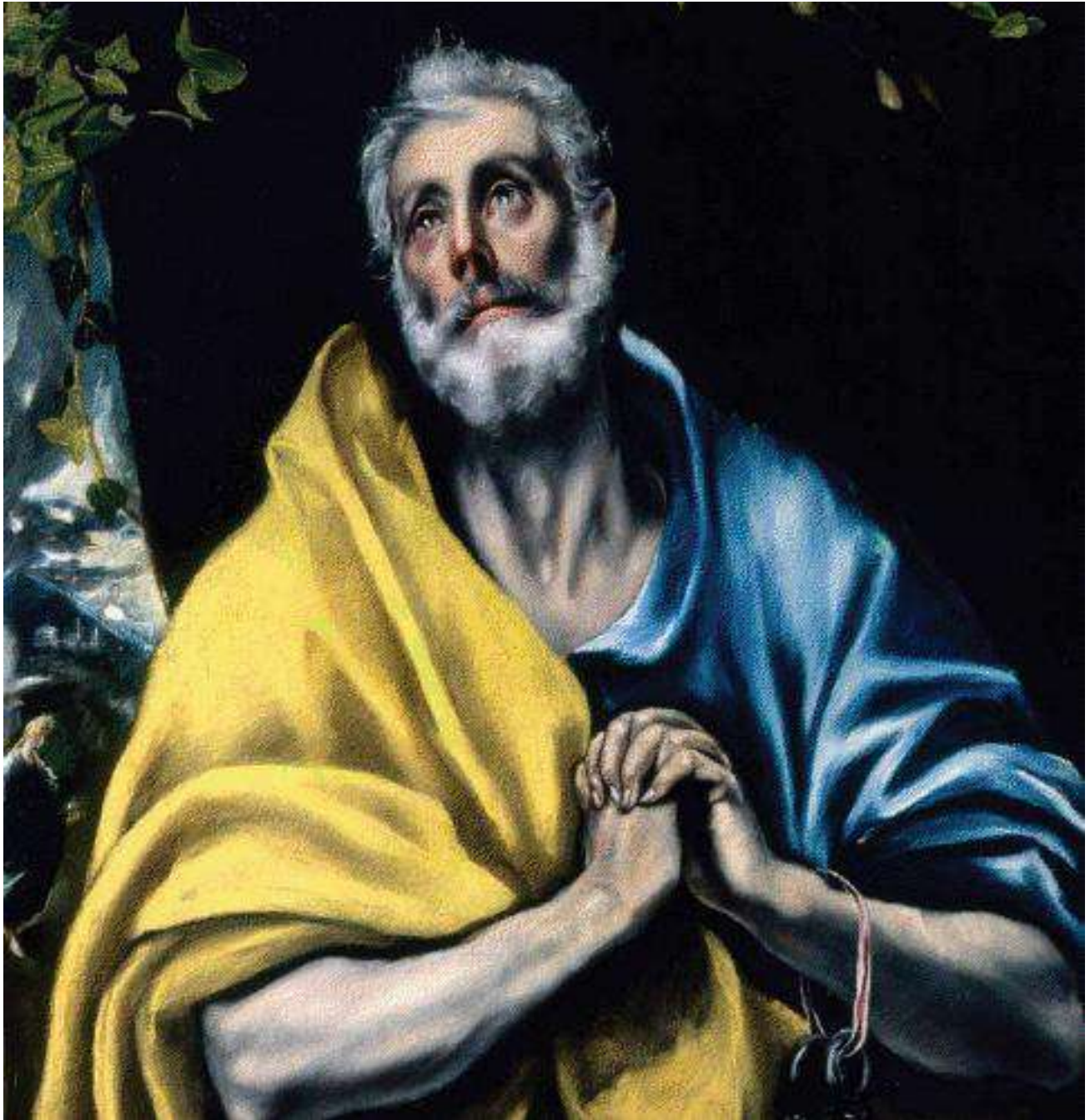


Fig 2.4.2 The Sorrow of St. Peter
for denying Christ three times (John 18:13-27)

29. What should we do to have true sorrow for our sins?

To have true sorrow for our sins we should ask God to grant us the grace of true sorrow, and to excite it in ourselves by thinking how great was the evil we have done by sinning.

30. In going to confession should we be extremely solicitous to have a true sorrow for our sins?

In going to confession we should certainly be very solicitous to have a true sorrow for our sins, because if sorrow is lacking the confession is no good.

31. If one has only venial sins to confess, must he be sorry for all of them?

He must repent of all that he remembers having committed. It is not necessary to confess all his venial sins, but it would be sacrilegious to deliberately not repent of any of those sins that he remembers. Some have recommended that if one has only venial sins to confess, one may confess some grave sin of the past, indicating that it has already been confessed, in order to increase sorrow and secure the confession of only venial sins. This has been recommended by some, but is not required.

32. If a man in mortal sin is dying and no priest is available to hear his confession, can his sins still be forgiven?

Yes, provided he makes an act of perfect contrition.

33. Is it well to make an act of contrition often?

It is well and most useful to make an act of contrition often, especially before going to sleep or when we know we have or fear we have fallen into mortal sin, in order to recover God's grace as soon as possible. Also, the practice of making an examination of conscience, followed by an act of perfect contrition, every night will make it easier for us to obtain from God the grace of making a good confession at the time of our greatest need, that is, when in danger of death.

RESOLUTION OF SINNING NO MORE

34. In what does a good resolution consist?

A good resolution consists in a determined will not to commit sin for the future and to use all necessary means to avoid it. To be good, a resolution should have three principal conditions: It ought to be *absolute*, *universal*, and *efficacious*.

An **absolute** resolution is one that is done without any restrictions of time, place or person.

A **universal** resolution is one that aims to avoid all mortal sins, both those already committed as well as those which we can possibly commit.

An **efficacious** resolution is one in which there is a determined will to lose everything rather than commit another sin; to avoid the dangerous occasions of sin; and to stamp out our bad habits.

35. What is meant by a bad habit and how do we correct them?

By a bad habit is meant an acquired disposition by which we fall easily into those sins to which we have become accustomed. To correct bad habits, we must watch over ourselves, pray much, go often to confession, have one good spiritual director, and put into practice the counsels and remedies which he gives us.

36. What is meant by dangerous occasions of sin?

By dangerous occasions of sin are meant all those circumstances of time, place, person, or things, which, of their very nature or because of our frailty, lead us to commit sin. We are strictly bound to shun them. A person who has a difficulty avoiding a certain occasion of sin should tell the matter to his confessor and follow his advice.

CONFESSION

37. Having prepared properly for confession by an examination of conscience, by exciting sorrow, and by forming a good resolution, what do you do next?

Having prepared properly for confession by an examination of conscience, by sorrow, and by a firm purpose of amendment, I will go to make an accusation of my sins to the priest in order to get absolution.

38. Can't I confess my sins directly to God?

You can, but that would not be a sacramental confession. If you confess your sins directly to God, you do not know whether God gave you an absolution because you do not hear His voice. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation you actually hear the priest who, in God's name, gives you pardon for your sins.

39. Is not the confession of sins to a priest only a recent invention of the Catholic Church?

No. It is an ancient practice that dates back to the time of the Apostles. St. James writes in his epistle: "Confess therefore your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be saved" (Jas 5:16). Then in the *Acts of the Apostles* it is written, "Many of them that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds" (Acts 19:18).

40. Does confession do any special good or comfort to our souls?

Yes, confession brings great comfort to souls burdened with guilt and remorse. Just as the disclosure of secret griefs to a friend bring peace, the disclosure of sins to God in the person of the priest gives a great feeling of peace and relief.

41. What sins are we bound to confess?

We are bound to confess all our mortal sins; it is well, however, to confess our venial sins also. (CCC 1458)

42. Which are the qualities confession ought to have?

The principal qualities which confession ought to have are five: It ought to be *humble, sincere, prudent, brief* and *entire*.

Humble means that the confession must be done without arrogance, pride or boasting, but with the feelings of one who is guilty, and who is begging for forgiveness.

Sincere means that the confession must reveal sins as they are, without excusing them, lessening them, or exaggerating them.

Prudent means that the confession must use the most careful words, and avoid revealing the sins of others.

Brief means that the confession must be short and should avoid saying anything useless or unnecessary for the purpose of confession.

Entire means that all mortal sins that we are conscious of having committed since our last good confession must be made known, together with the circumstances and number. The circumstances need to be confessed because they can change the nature and gravity of the sin, such as those circumstances that change a sinful action from being venial sin to one that is mortal, or those that makes a sinful action equivalent to two or more mortal sins. Here are some examples:

1. A boy tells a lie to avoid being punished by the school, but his lie made his classmate look bad and got in trouble instead. He must reveal this fact in confession. It is not enough to say, "I told a lie to avoid being punished." He must also say that his lie got his classmate in trouble. To be fair, he must confess his lie, not just to the priest during confession, but also to the school principal, in order to save his classmate

from getting an undeserved punishment from the school that his lie caused.

2. That the confession ought to be short, means that we should say nothing that is useless or unnecessary for the purpose of confession.
 3. A man steals a sacred object, say a chalice, from the church. In this case it is not enough to say, "I stole a drinking cup from the church." He must also say that the cup was a chalice, a sacred object used to hold the Blood of Christ at Mass. Stealing this chalice is not just an act of theft, but also an act of sacrilege. His act was therefore a double sin.
- 43. If a penitent is not certain of having committed a sin, must he confess it?**

If a penitent is not certain of having committed a sin, then he is not bound to confess it; and if he does confess it, he should add that he is not certain of having committed it.

- 44. What should he do who does not remember the exact number of his sins?**

He who does not distinctly remember the number of his sins must mention the number as nearly as he can.

- 45. Does he who through forgetfulness does not confess a mortal sin, or a necessary circumstance, make a good confession?**

He who through pure forgetfulness does not confess a mortal sin, or a necessary circumstance, makes a good confession, provided he has been duly diligent in trying to remember it. However, if a mortal sin forgotten in confession is afterwards remembered, we are still bound to confess it the next time we go to confession.

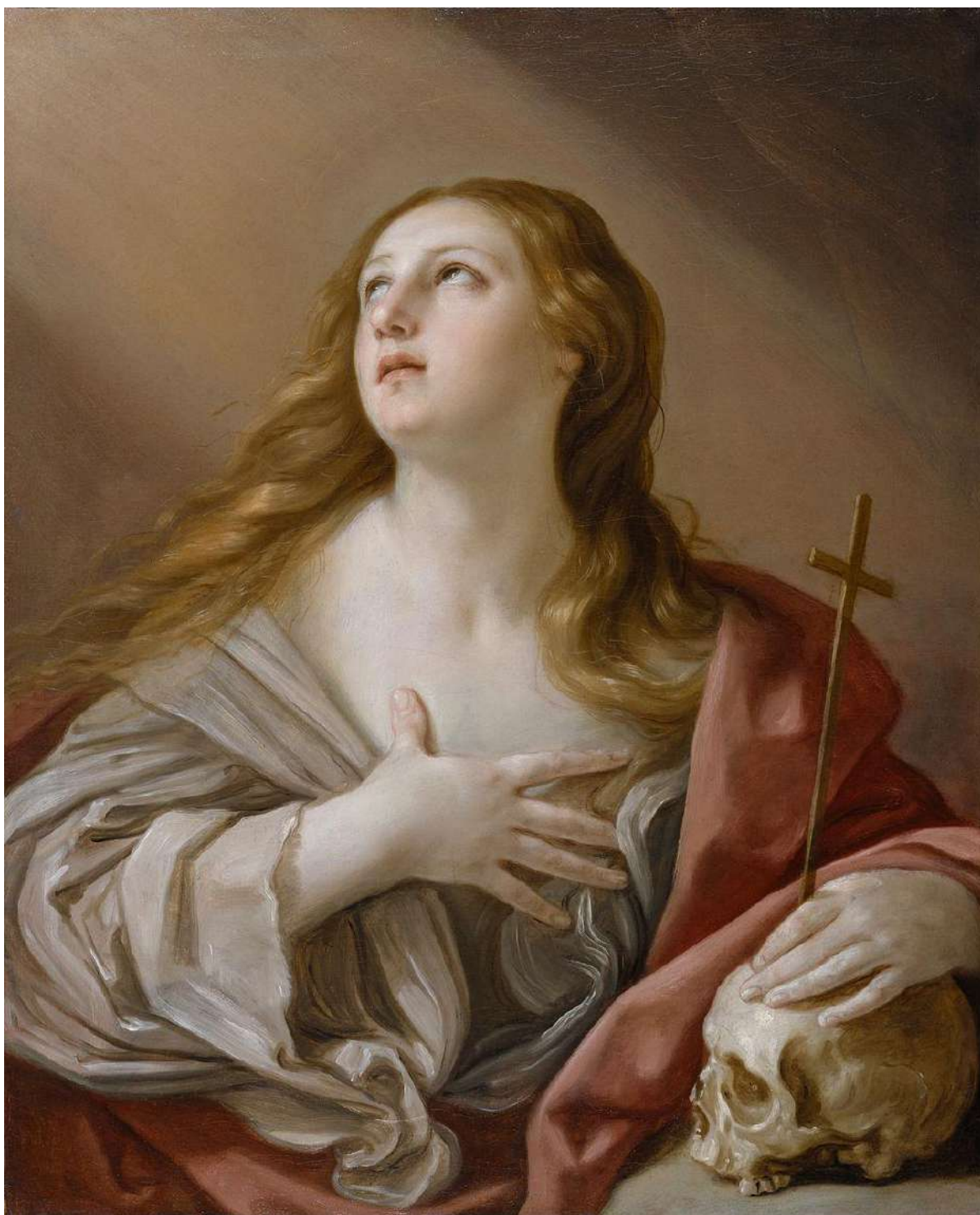


Fig 2.4.3 The Penitent Magdalene

46. What does he commit who, through shame or some other motive, willfully hides a mortal sin in confession?

He who, through shame or some other motive, willfully hides a mortal sin in confession, profanes the sacrament and is consequently guilty of *sacrilege*. None of his sins are forgiven, and he just added one more mortal sin in his soul. The next time that he goes to confession, he must reveal to his confessor that he made a bad confession, what sin he concealed, in how many past confessions he has concealed it, and confess again *all the sins he previously confessed since his last good confession*.

47. What reflection should a penitent make who is tempted to conceal a sin in confession?

He who is tempted to conceal a mortal sin in confession should reflect: (1) That he was not ashamed to sin, in the presence of God who sees all; (2) That it is better to manifest his sin secretly to the confessor than to live tormented by sin, die an unhappy death, and be covered with shame before the whole world on the day of general judgment; (3) That the confessor is bound by the seal of confession, even if it costs him his life. By the **seal of confession** the priest is bound to keep everything he hears in confession secret under pain of excommunication (CIC, cann. 983.1, 1388.1). In fact, even a layman, who overhears someone's confession, is also bound to secrecy with strict penalties not excluding excommunication (CIC, cann. 983.2, 1388.2).

48. Is it not a heavy burden to be obliged to confess one's sins to a priest, especially when these are shameful sins?

Although it may be a heavy burden to confess one's sins to a priest, still it must be done, because it is of divine precept, and because pardon can be obtained in no other way. Besides, we should be confident that whatever we reveal in confession will remain hidden because we know that the priest, who hears our confession, is bound by the seal of confession to keep everything he hears in confession secret. (CCC 1467)

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

49. How do you make a good confession?

These are the simple steps for making a good confession:

1. Kneel at the confessional and say, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned." Then, as the priest gives his blessing make the sign of the cross. If the priest omits the blessing, proceed to step #2.
2. Then say: "I made my last good confession _____ weeks ago. Since then I have committed the following sins."
3. Say all your sins humbly, sincerely, prudently, briefly and entirely, making sure that you mention also the number and relevant circumstances of your sins.
4. When you have finished, say: "For these and for all the sins of my past life, I am truly sorry, Father."

50. Having thus finished your confession, what remains to be done?

Having finished your confession, listen respectfully to what the confessor says, accept the penance with a sincere intention of performing it; and, while he gives you the absolution, say your Act of Contrition. Sometimes, the priest waits to hear you say and finish your Act of Contrition before giving the absolution. When he is finished, you simply say, "Amen." The priest may also say, "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good." Your response would be, "His mercy endures forever."

51. Having received absolution what remains to be done?

Having received absolution leave the confessional, thank God for a good confession, perform your penance as soon as possible, and put into practice the advice given to you by the confessor.

52. Must confessors always give absolution to those who go to confession to them?

Confessors should give absolution to those only whom they judge are properly disposed to receive it.

53. May confessors sometimes defer or refuse absolution?

Confessors not only may, but must defer or refuse absolution in certain cases so as not to profane the sacrament. For example, confessors may refuse absolution to the following penitents:

1. Those who refuse to learn the principal mysteries of their faith, or who neglect to learn their catechism;
2. Those who are gravely negligent in examining their conscience, or who show no signs of sorrow or repentance;
3. Those who are able but not willing to return or to make up for the goods they have damaged or stolen;
4. Those who are unwilling to restore the reputations of those whose good name they have injured;
5. Those who do not from their heart forgive their enemies;
6. Those who refuse to correct their bad habits;
7. Those who will not avoid bad places, bad shows, bad friends, and other occasions of sin that endanger their souls.

54. Is not a confessor too severe, who defers absolution because he does not believe the penitent is well enough disposed?

A confessor who defers absolution because he does not believe the penitent well enough disposed, is not too severe. On the contrary, he is being charitable and acts as a good physician who tries all remedies to save the patient from harming himself by a sacrilegious confession.

55. Should the sinner to whom absolution is deferred or refused, despair or leave off going to confession altogether?

A sinner to whom absolution is deferred or refused, should not despair or leave off going to confession altogether. On the contrary, he should humble himself, acknowledge his deplorable state, profit by the good advice his confessor gives him, and thus put himself as soon as possible in a state deserving of absolution.

56. Is the Sacrament of Reconciliation always held privately through individual confession and absolution?

Although the Sacrament of Reconciliation is ordinarily done privately through individual confession and absolution, a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation with general confession and general absolution may be permitted in case of grave necessity. However, only the diocesan bishop may decide whether or not the conditions of grave necessity exist for general absolution to be granted. The mere fact that there is a large gathering of the faithful, as in a feast or a pilgrimage, does not constitute grave necessity. (CCC 1484)

57. What case example can you give showing grave necessity?

In case of war, for example, where many will be exposed to the danger of death, but there is not enough priests nor enough time to hear every penitent's individual confession, a general absolution may be allowed. For the absolution to be valid, however, each penitent must still have the intention of individually confessing their sins to a priest at the soonest opportunity. (CCC 1483)

SATISFACTION OR PENANCE

58. What is satisfaction?

Satisfaction, which is also called sacramental penance, is one of the acts of the penitent by which he makes a certain reparation to the justice of God for his sins, by performing the works the confessor imposes on him. For example, if the penitent has stolen something, the confessor might ask him, in addition to doing some prayers, to return the good that he had stolen. That work – prayers and returning the stolen goods – is his penance or satisfaction. The penitent is bound to accept the penance imposed on him by the confessor if he can perform it; and if he cannot, he should humbly say so, and ask some other penance. (CCC 1460)

59. When should the penance be performed?

If the confessor has fixed no time, the penance should be performed as soon as convenient, and as far as possible while in the state of grace.

60. How should the penance be performed?

The penance should be performed entirely and devoutly.

61. Why is a penance imposed in confession?

A penance is imposed because, after sacramental absolution which remits sin and its eternal punishment, there generally remains a temporal punishment to be undergone, either in this world or in purgatory.

62. Why has our Lord willed to remit all the punishment due to sin in the Sacrament of Baptism but not in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

It has been suggested that our Lord has willed to remit all the punishment due to sin in the Sacrament of Baptism but not in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, because the sins after Baptism are much more grievous, being committed with fuller knowledge and greater ingratitude for God's benefits, and also in order that the obligation of satisfying for them may restrain us from falling into sin again.

63. Can we of ourselves make satisfaction to God?

Of ourselves we cannot make satisfaction to God, but we can do so by uniting ourselves to Jesus Christ, who alone gives value to our actions by the merits of His passion and death.

64. Does the penance which the confessor imposes always suffice to discharge the punishment which remains due to our sins?

The penance which the confessor imposes does not ordinarily suffice to discharge the punishment remaining due to our sins; and hence we must try to supply it by other voluntary penances.

65. Which are the works of penance?

The works of penance may be reduced to three kinds: prayer, fasting or mortification, and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy (visiting the sick, teaching the ignorant, etc.). Self-flagellation and other excessive bodily mortifications should not be done without consulting your priest or spiritual director.



Fig 2.4.4 Flagellants

66. Which penance is the more meritorious, that which the confessor gives, or that which we do of our own choice?

The penance which the confessor imposes is the most meritorious, because being part of the sacrament it receives greater virtue from the merits of the passion of Jesus Christ.

67. Do those who die after having received absolution but before they have fully satisfied the justice of God, go straight to Heaven?

No, they go to purgatory to satisfy the justice of God and to be perfectly purified.

68. Can the souls in purgatory be relieved of their pains by us?

Yes, the souls in purgatory can be helped by our prayers, by all our good works, by indulgences, but above all by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

69. Besides his penance, what else must the penitent do after confession?

Besides performing his penance after confession, the penitent, if he has justly injured another in his goods or reputation, or if he has given him scandal, must as soon as possible, and as far as he is able, restore him his goods, repair his honor or good name, and remedy the scandal.

70. How can the scandal given be remedied?

The scandal given can be remedied by removing the occasion of it and by edifying those whom we have scandalized by word and good example.

71. How should we make satisfaction to one whom we have offended?

We should make satisfaction to one whom we have offended by asking his pardon, or by some other suitable reparation.

LESSON 5 ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1. What is the Anointing of the Sick?

The Anointing of the Sick (formerly called “Extreme Unction”) is a sacrament instituted for the spiritual as well as for the temporal comfort of those who are seriously sick, or those who are in danger of death. (CCC 1511, 1514)

2. When did Jesus Christ institute this sacrament?

The time is uncertain, but some think that Christ instituted it between His Resurrection and Ascension. We know at least that the “Anointing of the Sick” was administered during the Apostolic times because St. James said in his epistle: “Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man. And the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him” (Jas 5:14-15).

3. What is the *matter* of this sacrament?

The *matter* of the sacrament, called “Anointing of the Sick,” is the laying on of hands and the anointing of the forehead and hands with oil blessed by a bishop.

4. What is the *form* of this sacrament?

The *form* of this sacrament is the words spoken by the priest as he anoints with blessed oil the forehead and the hands of the sick person: “*Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.*” (CCC 1513)

5. Who is the minister of this sacrament?

The minister of this sacrament is a priest. (CCC 1516)

6. What are the effects of the Anointing of the Sick?

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick produces the following effects: (1) It increases sanctifying grace; (2) It remits venial sins, and also mortal sins which the sick person, if contrite, is unable to confess; (3) It gives strength to bear illness patiently, to withstand temptation and to die holily; (4) It unites one more closely to Christ's passion and to contribute to the good of the Church; (5) It aids in restoring the health of the body if it is for the good of the soul; and (6) It prepares the soul for its final journey to Heaven. (CCC 1520-1523, 1532)



Fig 2.5.1 Anointing of the Sick

7. When should Anointing of the Sick be received?

The anointing of the sick should be received when the illness is dangerous and, if possible, after the sick person has received the

Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist. It is even well to receive it while the patient still has the use of his senses, and has some hope of recovery.

Incidentally, Communion given to the sick in danger of death is called **Holy Viaticum** (from the Latin word *via*, which means way), because it supports them on their way from this life to eternity. (CCC 1524)

8. Why is it well to receive the Anointing of the Sick when the sick person has still the use of his senses, and has some hope of recovery?

It is well to receive the Anointing of the Sick while the sick person retains the use of his senses, and while there remains some hope of recovery because:

- 1.) He thus receives it with better dispositions, and is hence able to derive greater benefit from it;
- 2.) This sacrament restores health of body (should it be for the good of the soul) by assisting the healing powers of nature. Hence, it should not be deferred until recovery is despaired of.

9. With what dispositions should the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick be received?

The principal dispositions for receiving Anointing of the Sick are: To be in the state of grace; to have confidence in the power of this sacrament and in the mercy of God, and to be resigned to the will of the Lord.

10. What should be the sick person's feelings on seeing the priest?

On seeing the priest, the sick person should feel thankful to God for having sent him; and should gladly receive the comforts of religion, which, if he is able, he should request himself.

LESSON 6 HOLY ORDERS

1. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the Church continues the mission entrusted by Christ to the Apostles, by giving power to exercise the duties connected with the worship of God and the salvation of souls, and which imprints the character of minister of God on the soul of him who receives it. (CCC 1536)

2. Why is it called Orders?

It is called Orders because it comprises various grades, the one subordinate to the other, from which the sacred hierarchy is composed. The highest grade is the episcopate, which contains the fullness of the priesthood; then comes the priesthood; then the diaconate. Integration to each grade is accomplished by a rite known as *ordination*. (CCC 1537)

3. When did Jesus Christ institute the Sacerdotal Order?

Jesus Christ instituted the Sacerdotal Order at the Last Supper when he conferred on the Apostles and their successors the power of consecrating the Holy Eucharist. Then on the day of His Resurrection, He conferred on them the power of remitting and retaining sin, thus constituting them the first priests of the New Law in all the fullness of their power.

4. What is the *matter* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

The *matter* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders is the imposition of the bishop's hands on the recipient, which is a sign indicative of the grace conferred by this sacrament. (CCC 1597)

5. What is the *form* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

The *form* of Holy Orders is the prescribed prayers that accompany the imposition of the bishop's hands, and which give meaning to the matter or the imposition of hands. The prayers are different for the ordination of bishops, priests and deacons (CCC 1586 -1588).



Fig 2.6.1 Ordination to the Priesthood

6. Who is the minister of this sacrament?

The bishop is the minister of this sacrament. (CCC 1576) The bishop ordinarily ordains priests and deacons in his own diocese. However, he may ordain clergy in another diocese with the diocesan bishop's permission. Also, only a bishop can consecrate another bishop, but not without papal approval (CIC can. 1013).

7. What are the effects of Holy Orders?

Holy Orders gives bishops the spiritual power to ordain other bishops, priests and deacons, and it gives priests the power to consecrate bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, to administer the sacraments, and to preach in the name of the Church. It also creates an indelible mark on the soul of the recipient, thus marking him a minister of God. (CCC 1581-1583)

8. How do you know that the ordination of bishops and priests is not a recent Church invention and that it was practiced by the Apostles?

One evidence is St. Paul, who gave this advice to Timothy, the first bishop of Ephesus: “Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood” (1 Tim 4:14). Then to Titus, first bishop of Crete, he also writes: “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that you might set in order the things that are wanting and ordain priests in every city, as I also appointed you” (Titus 1:5). (CCC 1590)

9. Is the dignity of the Catholic priesthood a great dignity?

The dignity of the Catholic priesthood is great indeed, because of the two-fold power which Jesus Christ has conferred upon it — that over His real Body and that over His Mystical Body, the Church; and because of the divine mission committed to priests to lead men to eternal life.

10. Is the Catholic priesthood necessary in the Church?

The Catholic priesthood is necessary in the Church, because without it the faithful would be deprived of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and of the greater part of the sacraments. They also would have no one to instruct them in the faith, and they would be as sheep without a shepherd, a prey to wolves. In short, the Church, such as Christ instituted it, would no longer exist.

11. Is it a sin to despise priests?

It is a very grave sin, because the scorn and insults cast on priests fall upon Jesus Christ Himself, who said to His Apostles, “He who despises you, despises Me” (Luke 10:16). However, it is not a sin to expose the activities of a pastor who covers up a sinful lifestyle under the cloak of sacred ministry.

12. Is it lawful for priests to marry?

No, because there is a Church precept against it, which comes to us by tradition from the Apostles. God’s service requires total dedication and an undivided heart. Even the Apostles did not stay with their wives after they were called to the ministry. (CCC 1579)

13. Is it lawful for women to be priests?

No, because it is clear from Christ’s actions that He wanted an all-male priesthood. If our Lord did not mind having female priests, then why did He select only male Apostles? Why did He not even call His own mother, the Virgin Mary, to the ministry? From the beginning of the Church and through the centuries, the Church never changed her tradition of ordaining only men to the priesthood. For the priest often has to act *in the person of Christ*, especially in celebrating the Eucharist. How appropriate do you think is it for a female priest to consecrate the host and say, in the person of Christ, “This is *My Body*?”

Also, every priest is a sign of Christ because the priest sacramentally represents Christ. Now, just as the sacramental sign of Baptism is lost when liquid other than water is used, so the sacramental sign of the priesthood is lost when someone other than a male person is ordained because Christ, whom the priest represents, became incarnate as male. (CCC 1548)

14. What motive should he have who embraces the ecclesiastical state?

The motive of one who embraces the ecclesiastical state should be the glory of God and the salvation of souls alone.

15. What is necessary to enter the ecclesiastical state?

To enter the ecclesiastical state a divine vocation is necessary before all else. To find out if God calls us to the ecclesiastical state we should: (1) Fervently pray to the Lord to make known His will to us; (2) Consult our bishop or a learned and prudent director; (3) Diligently examine whether we have the capacity necessary for the studies, the duties, and the obligations of this state, which includes a life of celibacy. (CCC 1578-1579)

16. If one were to enter the ecclesiastical state without a divine vocation would he do wrong?

If one were to enter the ecclesiastical state without a divine vocation, he would commit a great wrong and run the risk of being lost.

17. Do those parents sin who, from worldly motives, impel their sons to embrace the ecclesiastical state without any vocation?

Those parents who, for worldly motives, impel their sons to embrace the ecclesiastical state without any vocation commit a very grave sin, because by thus acting they usurp the right God has reserved to Himself alone of choosing His own ministers; and they expose their children to the danger of eternal damnation.

18. Which are the duties of the faithful toward those who are called to Holy Orders?

The faithful should: (1) Give their children and dependents full liberty to follow the call of God; (2) Pray God to grant good pastors and zealous ministers to His service; (3) Have special respect for all who are consecrated by Holy Orders to God's service.

LESSON 7 MATRIMONY

NATURE OF MATRIMONY

1. What is the Sacrament of Matrimony?

Matrimony is a sacrament, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, which creates a holy and indissoluble union between a man and woman, which gives them the grace to produce and raise their children as Christians (first aim of marriage), and to love each other holily (second aim of marriage).

2. So, marriage has two aims?

Yes. The primary aim of marriage is the procreation and education of children. The secondary aim is the mutual love and comfort of man and wife. (CCC 1601)

3. Can man be married to man, and woman to woman?

No, because the primary aim of marriage is to produce and raise children for God. Although we often hear of “same-sex marriage,” especially among gays and lesbians, the truth is that the marriage of two people of the same sex is not capable of naturally producing children and, for that reason, fails to meet the primary aim and purpose of marriage. A true marriage is always between one man and one woman. If same-sex marriage is not even a natural and true marriage in the eyes of God, much less can it be a sacrament. That some States legalize this practice is unfortunate, because it betrays an ignorance of the primary aim of marriage.

4. Does the Sacrament of Matrimony have any special signification?

The Sacrament of Matrimony signifies the indissoluble union of Jesus Christ with the Church, which is His Spouse and our Holy Mother.

5. By whom was Matrimony instituted?

Matrimony was instituted by God Himself in the Garden of Paradise (Gen 1:27-28; 2:21-24), and was raised to the dignity of a sacrament by Jesus Christ (Matt 19:6).

6. Why do we say that the bond of marriage is indissoluble?

We say that the bond of marriage is indissoluble or that it cannot be dissolved except by the death of either husband or wife, because God so ordained it from the beginning and our Lord Jesus Christ solemnly proclaimed it. (CCC 1614)

7. Can the contract be separated from the sacrament in Christian marriage?

No, in marriage among Christians the contract cannot be separated from the sacrament, because, for Christians, marriage is nothing else than the natural contract itself, raised by Jesus Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. For this reason, every true marriage among Christians, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, is also a sacrament. For Catholics, however, some requirements must be met before the marriage can be regarded as true or valid (See Q. 17 below).

8. What is the *matter* of the Sacrament of Matrimony?

The *matter* of Matrimony is the external *exchange of promises* by which man and woman bind each other to the indissoluble union of marriage. This verbal exchange of promises is the sensible sign of the grace conferred by this sacrament.

9. What is the *form* of the Sacrament of Matrimony?

The *form* of Matrimony is the *mutual consent* of the man and woman to the words exchanged during the ceremony. “I take you to be my wife...”; “I take you to be my husband...” The external words themselves are just the *matter* of the sacrament, but the mutual consent of the parties to these words is the *form* that constitutes the covenant of sacramental marriage. (CCC 1626)

10. What effects does the Sacrament of Matrimony produce?

The Sacrament of Matrimony: (1) Gives an increase of sanctifying grace; (2) Gives a special sacramental grace for the responsible discharge of all the duties of the married state.



Fig 2.7.1 Sacrament of Matrimony

MINISTER – RIGHT DISPOSITIONS

11. Who are the ministers of this sacrament?

In the Latin Church the ministers of this sacrament are not the priest, but the **couple themselves**, who together confer the sacrament to each other normally during Holy Mass. (CCC 1623)

12. How is this sacrament administered?

In the Latin rite this sacrament is administered by the contracting parties themselves who declare, in the presence of the priest and of two witnesses, that they take each other in marriage.

13. What use, then, is the blessing which the parish priest gives to the married couple?

The blessing which the parish priest gives to the married couple is not necessary to constitute the sacrament, but it is given to sanction their union in the name of the Church and to invoke on them more abundantly the blessing of God. (CCC 1630)

14. What intention should those have who contract marriage?

Those who contract marriage should have the intention: (1) Of doing the will of God, who calls them to that state; (2) Of working out in that state the salvation of their souls; (3) Of bringing up their children as Christians, if God should bless them with any.

15. How should those about to be married prepare themselves to receive this sacrament fruitfully?

In order to receive this sacrament fruitfully, those about to be married should: (1) Earnestly recommend themselves to God, so as to know His will and obtain the graces necessary for that state; (2) Consult their parents before making any promise, because obedience and the respect due to them demand this; (3) Prepare themselves by a good confession, or, if necessary, a general confession of their whole life; (4) Avoid all dangerous familiarity in word or act while in each other's company. (CCC 1622)

16. Which are the principal obligations of married persons?

Married persons should: (1) Guard inviolably their conjugal fidelity and behave always and in all things as Christians; (2) Love one another, bear patiently with one another, and live in peace and concord; (3) Think seriously of providing for their children, if they have any, according to their needs; raising them up as Christians, and leave them free to choose the state of life to which they are called by God. (CCC 1652-1654)



Fig 2.7.2 Betrothal of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph

CONDITIONS AND IMPEDIMENTS

17. What is necessary to contract a Catholic marriage validly?

To contract a Catholic marriage validly it is necessary to be free from every diriment impediment to marriage; and to give consent freely to the marriage contract in the presence of the parish priest (or a priest delegated by him) and of two witnesses.

18. What is necessary to contract marriage lawfully?

To contract marriage lawfully it is necessary to be free from every diriment impediment to marriage; to be instructed in the principal truths of religion; and, finally, to be in a state of grace; otherwise a sacrilege would be committed.

19. What are impediments to marriage?

Impediments to marriage are certain circumstances which render marriage either invalid or unlawful. The former are called *diriment impediments* and the latter *prohibitory impediments*.

Diriment (or invalidating) impediments render a marriage invalid. Examples of invalidating impediments (CIC, cann. 1083-1107):

1. **Lack of age.** The minimum age for valid marriage is determined by the Bishops Conference of each country. In the U.S. the minimum age is 16 for a man, 14 for a woman.
2. **Antecedent and perpetual impotence** (permanent inability to perform the sexual act). However, neither a doubt about impotence nor sterility (inability to have a child) is an impediment to marriage.
3. **An existing marriage** that has not been annulled.
4. **Disparity of worship**, that is, when one party is baptized and the other is not (Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, infidels, etc.)
5. **Holy Orders**, and irrevocable **solemn vows** of chastity in a religious institute.
6. **Lack of free matrimonial consent** due to coercion, fear, ignorance, mental incapacity, psychological immaturity, etc.

7. **Blood relationship** to any degree in the direct line (natural or legitimate), and to the fourth degree in the collateral line.

Prohibitory impediments render the marriage *unlawful*, but not invalid. Examples are: a simple vow of chastity; mixed religion (or marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic Christian); marriage at forbidden times (Lent and Advent). Actually, a marriage can be done at any time of the year. What is not permitted during Lent and Advent is a pompous wedding or a Nuptial Mass which is not in keeping with the spirit of the season.

20. Are the faithful obliged to make known to Church authority impediments of which they have knowledge?

The faithful are obliged to make known to Church authority impediments of which they have knowledge. For this reason, the names of those who intend to get married are published in the church.

21. Who has the power to regulate impediments to marriage, to dispense from them, and to judge of the validity of Catholic marriage?

The Church alone has the power to place and regulate impediments to marriage, to judge of the validity of marriage among Catholics and to dispense from the impediments which she has placed.

22. Why has the Church alone power to place and regulate impediments and to judge of the validity of marriage?

The Church alone has power to place and regulate impediments, to judge of the validity of marriage, and to dispense from the impediments which she has placed, because the contract, being inseparable from the sacrament in a Christian marriage, also comes under the power of the Church, to which alone Jesus Christ gave the right to make laws and give decisions in sacred things.

23. Can the civil authority dissolve the bonds of Christian marriage by divorce?

No, the bond of Christian marriage cannot be dissolved by the civil authority, because the civil authority cannot validly interfere with the matter of the sacrament nor can it put asunder what God has joined together. A civil divorce does not dissolve a Christian marriage, and those who remarry civilly after getting a civil divorce would not be truly married before the sight of God and, should they live together, would be guilty of adultery. (CCC 1650)

24. What is a civil marriage?

It is nothing but a mere formality prescribed by the civil law to give and insure the civil effects of the marriage to the spouses and their children.

25. Is it sufficient for a Christian to get only the civil marriage or contract?

For a Christian, it is NOT sufficient to get only the civil contract, because it is not a sacrament, and therefore not a true marriage. Spouses who would live together united by only a civil marriage would be in a habitual state of mortal sin, and their union would always be illegitimate in the sight of God and of the Church.

26. Should those who marry in church also get a civil marriage?

Civil marriage should also be performed because, though it is not a sacrament, it provides the spouses and their children with the civil effects of conjugal society. For this reason, the Church as a general rule allows the sacramental marriage only after the formalities prescribed by the civil authorities have been accomplished. In many countries, however, especially English speaking countries, the civil authority acknowledges the religious marriage in the church and gives it the same value as civil marriage; thus there is no need of a separate ceremony. However, the states may add certain requirements and formalities which should be observed.

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Fig 2 Portrait of Jesus Christ

Artist: Heinrich Hofmann (1824-1911)

Source for the Portrait:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christ,_by_Heinrich_Hofmann.jpg

Extracted from the Painting “Christ and the Rich Young Ruler”

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hoffman-ChristAndTheRichYoungRuler.jpg>

Fig 2.0.1 Illustration of the Seven Sacraments (circa turn of 19th/20th century)

Top row: Baptism and Confirmation

Middle row: Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

Bottom row: Holy Orders and Matrimony

Artist: Anonymous.

Source: Dr. Fischer Kunstauktionen, Slovene Ethnographic Museum

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hinterglasbild_Die_Sieben_Sakramente_Slowenien.jpg

Fig 2.0.2 Sacramentals

Note: The site has a Pinterest button, indicating that the image may be shared for non-commercial use.

<https://shop.catholicsupply.com/blog/What-are-Sacramentals-and-how-can-we-use-them>

Fig 2.1.1 Infant Baptism

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<https://pixabay.com/photos/baptism-catholic-baby-religion-644267/>

Fig 2.1.2 The Baptism of Christ

Artist: Paolo Veronese (1523-1588)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Veronese_-_Baptism_of_Christ,_circa_1583-1584.jpg

Fig 2.2.1 Child being Confirmed by a Bishop

Artist: Giuseppe Crespi (1665-1747)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giuseppe_Maria_Crespi_-_Confirmation_-_WGA05765.jpg

Fig 2.3.1 Hosts made of Wheat Bread in the Bowls and Grape Wine in the Chalice

Free Photo by Adamy Gianinni (Seutec Studio) from Pixabay.com.

<https://pixabay.com/photos/church-communion-cat-eucharist-5011686/>

Fig 2.3.2 The Host is the Body of Jesus Christ after the Consecration

<https://publicdomainvectors.org/en/free-clipart/Illustration-of-Holy-Eucharist-symbol/33225.html>

Fig. 2.3.3 Jesus Christ is Present Wholly and Entirely in the Holy Eucharist

Free Illustration by Annalise Batista from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/holy-communion-catholic-eucharist-4784984/>

Fig 2.3.4 Christ instituted the Eucharist during His Last Supper with the Apostles

Source: Archive.org.

<https://ia803006.us.archive.org/7/items/OldBiblePicturesSmaller/A6E1CBBB-2236-4C0C-A4F0-2AC2A5453AD1.jpeg>

Fig 2.3.5 Girl Receiving Communion

Courtesy of Jeanne Boleyn, 2009

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tatiana_Communion2.jpg

Fig 2.3.6 Boy Receiving Communion

Free picture by Herney Gómez from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/photos/first-communion-rite-religion-2925469/>

Fig 2.4.1 Confession

Artist: Giuseppe Molteni (1800-1867)

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Artgate_Fondazione_Caripio_-_Molteni_Giuseppe,_La_confessione.jpg

Fig 2.4.2 The Sorrow of St. Peter

Artist: El Greco (1541-1614)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:El_Greco_-_Las_lágrimas_de_San_Pedro.jpg

Fig 2.4.3 The Penitent Magdalene

Artist: Guido Reni (1575-1642)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Guido_Reni_-_The_Penitent_Magdalene_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Fig 2.4.4 Flagellants (PD)

Illustration from the Nuremberg Chronicle, by Harmann Schedel (1440-1514)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_Flagellants_\(CCXVr\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nuremberg_chronicles_-_Flagellants_(CCXVr).jpg)

Fig 2.5.1 Anointing of the Sick

Artist: Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:L%27Extrême_onction_I,_vers_1640,_Grantham,_Belvoir_Castle.jpg

Fig 2.6.1 Ordination to the Priesthood

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Holy_Orders_Picture.jpg

Fig 2.7.1 Sacrament of Matrimony

The store has a Pinterest button, indicating that images may be shared for non-commercial use.

<https://www.catholicfaithstore.com/daily-bread/the-catholic-view-on-marriage-and-the-sacrament-of-matrimony/>

Fig 2.7.2 Betrothal of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph

Artist: Sebestyén Stettner (1699-1758)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Betrothal_of_Virgin_Mary_and_St_Joseph,_1743.jpg

My Free Catechism

Book Three: The Commandments

By Mr. Romeo Maria del Santo Niño, O.P.

Nihil Obstat:

Reverend Kevin J. Bobbin
Ad hoc Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown

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Given this 16th day of September, 2020 at the Chancery of the Diocese of Allentown.



Reverend Eugene P. Ritz
Chancellor

Alfred A. Schlert

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown

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This catechism is intended as a supplementary learning material for children in the upper grades, but is substantial enough to be usable also by young adults and the general public. It also aims to serve as a free resource for many average Catholics who need to learn or review what the Catholic faith teaches, but who have no time nor endurance to read the voluminous and theologically precise *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

This catechism is divided into four books; namely, Book One: *The Apostle's Creed*, Book Two: *The Sacraments*, Book Three: *The Commandments*, and Book Four: *Prayer and Christian Perfection*. The books are available in the form of pdf files that may be copied, shared, printed on paper or uploaded to children's mobile devices, iPods or computer tablets.

I did not write this catechism from scratch. To save time I made use of the questions and answers from old catechisms in the public domain, particularly the *Catechism of St. Pius X*. However, I edited, expanded and updated many of the texts to reflect current Church teachings. Color texts and illustrations, which are missing in old catechisms, were added to make the book attractive to young readers.

Many of the pictures used here are also in the public domain here in the U.S., but there are a few copyrighted ones that I took the liberty of using based on the concept of "fair use," as defined by Title 17, U.S. Code §107, for educational and non-commercial purposes. Picture credits and a link to their sources and license (when available) are given at the end of the book.

External references in the texts, such as references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) or to the *1983 Code of Canon Law* (CIC), are added mainly for the use of parents or teachers who are coaching the children in learning this catechism. However, it is hoped that through the reading of select paragraphs of the CCC, many will be encouraged to read the entire book and profit from its wealth of wisdom.

Biblical texts used in this catechism are mostly from the *Douay-Challoner Rheims* version which, because they are in the public domain, I have edited slightly just to make the English less archaic for contemporary readers. The final texts may be compared with the original text of the *Douay-Challoner-Rheims* version (link below).

Although I made this book as a lay Dominican, this book is my personal project and not the project of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic. Therefore, the ideas expressed are mine alone and do not represent the endorsement or position of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic or the Order of Preachers as a whole.

USEFUL LINKS

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC – comes from the Latin title *Codex Iuris Canonici*)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html

Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism

<https://archive.org/details/AnecdotesAndExamplesIllustrating/page/n5/mode/2up>

Douay-Challoner-Rheims Bible (public domain)

<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>



Fig 3 The Holy Family
Artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

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PART 3 THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND OF THE CHURCH

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD IN GENERAL

1. What is treated of in the third part of this catechism?

The third part of this catechism (Book Three) treats of the Commandments of God and those of the Church.

2. How many commandments of God are there?

God has given Ten Commandments, collectively called the *Decalogue*. Here are the Ten Commandments of God (Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-22):

I am the Lord thy God:

1. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me;
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;
3. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day;
4. Honor thy father and thy mother,
5. Thou shalt not kill;
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery;
7. Thou shalt not steal;
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor;
9. Thou shalt not covet another's wife;
10. Thou shalt not covet another's goods.

3. Why are the Ten Commandments of God called the Decalogue?

The word "Decalogue" means "ten words." The Ten Commandments of God are called the Decalogue because God, aside from having stamped them on the soul of every man, also promulgated them in the form of ten words engraved by His own finger on two tables of stone in Mount Sinai (Ex 31:18).

4. Which are the commandments in the first table of stone?

The commandments in the first table are the first three, which pertain to the love of God and our duties toward Him.

5. Which are the commandments in the second table of stone?

The commandments in the second table are the last seven, which pertain to the love of neighbor and our duties toward him. (CCC 2067)



Fig 3.0.1 Moses Carrying the Two Tables of Stone where the Ten Commandments Were Written On (Deut 4:13)

6. Which is the chief and greatest commandment?

The chief and greatest commandment is the **love of God**: “You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength” (Mark 12:30). In the Decalogue the first three commandments, 1, 2 and 3, are all summed up in the command to love God above all things.

7. What is the second greatest commandment?

The second greatest commandment is the **love of our neighbor**: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). The rest of the commandments, 4 thru 10, are all summed up in the command to love our neighbor. Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us an example of how to love our neighbor in the “Story of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:25-37).

8. Is it then possible to summarize the Ten Commandments?

Yes, the Ten Commandments may be summarized into just these two: *love God above all things* and *love your neighbor as yourself*.

9. Are we bound to observe all the commandments?

Yes, we are bound to observe all the commandments (CCC 2068) because we are bound to live according to the will of God who created us, and because a serious transgression against even one of them is enough to merit hell.

10. Is it possible for any person to observe all the commandments?

Yes, it is possible to observe all of God’s commandments, because God never commands anything that we cannot fulfill, and because He gives grace to observe them to those who ask it as they should. In the Bible we see Zachary and Elizabeth as examples of people who observed all the commandments: “They were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord without blame” (Luke 1:6).

11. What, in a general way, should we consider in each of the commandments?

In each of the commandments we should consider its positive part and its negative part, that is, what it commands and what it forbids.

12. Why is it said at the beginning of the Ten Commandments, “I am the Lord thy God”?

It is said at the beginning of the Ten Commandments: “I am the Lord thy God,” to show us that God our Creator is the one who gives these commandments, and that we, being His creatures, are bound to obey them.

SINS

13. What is sin?

Sin is an offense against God. Any act against the will of God, or any act of disobedience against Him, is a sin. (CCC 1849-1850)

14. How many kinds of sin are there?

There are two kinds of sin: *original sin* and *actual sin*.

Original sin is the sin in which we are all born, and which we contracted just by being descendants of disobedient first parents, Adam and Eve.

Actual sin is that which man, after coming to the use of reason, commits of his own free will.

15. What evil effects has the sin of Adam and Eve brought upon us?

The evil effects of the sin of Adam and Eve are: The privation of grace, the loss of Paradise, together with ignorance, inclination to evil, death, sickness and all our other miseries.



Fig 3.0.2 Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise

16. How is original sin cancelled?
Original sin is cancelled by Baptism.

17. How many kinds of actual sin are there?

There are two kinds of actual sin: *mortal* and *venial*. **Mortal** sins are big sins; **venial** sins are small sins. (CCC 1854)

18. What is mortal sin?

Mortal sin is the destruction of charity in the heart, by seriously failing in our duties toward God, toward our neighbor, or toward ourselves. (CCC 1855)

19. Why is it called mortal?

It is called mortal (from the Latin *mors*, which means death) because it brings death on the soul by making it lose sanctifying grace which is the life of the soul, just as the soul itself is the life of the body.

20. What injury does mortal sin do the soul?

- a) Mortal sin deprives the soul of grace and makes it lose Heaven and the friendship of God;
- b) It deprives it of merits already acquired, and renders it incapable of acquiring new merits;
- c) It makes it the slave of the devil;
- d) It makes it deserve hell as well as the chastisements of this life.

21. What is required to constitute a mortal sin?

To constitute a mortal sin, three things are required (CCC 1857-1861):

- a) It must be about a serious or *grave matter*;
- b) There must be *full knowledge* or full consciousness of the gravity of the matter;
- c) There must be *full consent*; that means, there must be a deliberate will to commit the sin.

When any of the above conditions is missing, then the sin is a venial sin. (CCC 1862)

22. What is venial sin?

Venial sin does not totally destroy charity in the heart, but wounds it by slightly failing in some duty toward God, toward our neighbor, or toward ourselves. (CCC 1855) It is called venial because:

- a) It is not serious compared with mortal sin;
- b) It does not deprive us of divine grace; and
- c) God more readily pardons us.

23. What harm does venial sin do the soul?

Venial sin: (1) Weakens and chills charity in us; (2) Disposes us to mortal sin; (3) Renders us deserving of temporal punishments both in this world and in the next.

24. Are all mortal sins equally bad?

No, some mortal sins are more grievous than others, such as the “blasphemies against the Holy Spirit” and the “sins that cry out to God for vengeance.”

25. Which are the “blasphemies against the Holy Spirit”?

The blasphemies against the Holy Spirit are these six:
 (1) Despairing of being saved; (2) Presuming on being saved without merit; (3) Opposing the known truth; (4) Envyng another's spiritual goods; (5) Obstinate remaining in sin; and finally, (6) Final impenitence. (CCC 1864)

Despair of being saved – is the lack of confidence in God's mercy. It is the sin of Cain who said, “Oh, my sin is too great to be forgiven” (Gen 4:13).

Presumption of being saved without merit – is an over-confidence in God's mercy that one can be saved without contrition and without doing good works. Those who disbelieve in hell on the excuse that God is all merciful also commit the same mistake.

Opposing the known truths – is obstinacy in refusing to accept the truth, especially truths of faith. This is committed especially by those who persist in their unbelief or heresy.

Envy another's spiritual goods – is a sadness in seeing another person grow in virtue and perfection, because it reminds them of their foolish disregard of their own soul.

Obstinately remaining in sin – is a willful persistence in wickedness even after sufficient instruction and admonition.

Final impenitence – is to die without contrition or repentance of one's sins. Those who live through life disregarding God and His laws often die impenitent.

26. Why are these sins said to be against the Holy Spirit?

These sins are said to be against the Holy Spirit because they are committed through pure malice, which is contrary to goodness, which is the special attribute of the Holy Spirit.

27. Which are the “sins that cry to God for vengeance”?

The “sins that cry to God for vengeance” are these: (1) Willful murder (including abortion); (2) The sin of sodomy (unnatural sexual acts, including homosexual acts, which by nature cannot result in the production of an offspring); (3) Oppression of the poor; (4) Defrauding laborers of their wages. (CCC 1867)

28. Why are these sins said to cry to God for vengeance?

These sins are said to cry to God for vengeance because the Bible says so, and because their iniquity is so great and so manifest that it provokes God to punish them with the severest chastisements. For example, God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 19:24) because of the lust and unnatural behavior of their inhabitants (Jude 1:7), after whom their sin was later named “sodomy.”

29. Are there biblical texts proving that the four sins cited above really cry out to God for vengeance?

Yes, there are, for that is how we know them.

- a.) **Willful murder** – the unjust taking away of another person’s life. In the book of *Genesis*, which records the murder committed by Cain against Abel, God spoke to Cain and said, “What have you done? the voice of your brother's blood cries to Me from the earth” (Gen 4:10).
- b.) **Sodomy** – the carnal sin against nature, which is any kind of sexual act that cannot naturally generate an offspring. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah indulged in these kinds of sins that the angels who came to save Lot and his family told him: “We will destroy this place, because their cry has grown loud before the Lord, who has sent us to destroy them” (Gen 19:13).
- c.) **Oppression of the poor** – the act of unjustly taking advantage of inferiors. “You shall not hurt a widow or an orphan. If you hurt them, they will cry out to me, and I will hear their cry; and my rage shall be enkindled, and I will strike you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless” (Ex 22:22-24).
- d.) **Defrauding laborers of their wages** – the act of unjustly reducing or holding back the laborer’s wages for selfish reasons. St. James wrote: “Behold the wages of the laborers who have reaped down your fields cry, which by fraud you have held back, and the cry of the laborers has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth” (Jas 5:4).

LESSON 1 THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not have strange gods before me”

1. What does God command us by the first commandment?

By the first commandment, “Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me,” God commands us to acknowledge, adore, love and serve Him alone as our Sovereign Lord. He also wants us to nourish our faith, hope, and love for Him above all creatures.

2. How do we fulfill the first commandment?

We fulfill the first commandment by the practice of internal and external worship.

3. What is internal worship?

Internal worship is the honor which is given to God with the faculties of the soul alone, such as by prayer and adoration.

4. What is external worship?

External worship is the homage that is given to God by means of outward acts, such as by kneeling, making the sign of the cross, praying in public, attending Mass on Sundays, and performing other external sacrifices and acts of piety.

5. Is it not enough internally to adore God with the heart alone?

No, it is not enough internally to adore God with the heart alone. We must also adore Him externally with both soul and body, because He is the Creator and absolute Lord of both.

6. Can there be external worship without internal worship?

No, in no way can there be external worship without internal, because unless external worship is accompanied by internal, it is destitute of life, of merit, and of efficacy, like a body without a soul. (CCC 2100)

7. What is forbidden by the first commandment?

The first commandment forbids:

- a) *Acts against faith* – which include neglecting to study our religion, disregarding what the Church teaches, obstinately refusing to accept a truth of our Faith, and holding that all religions are equally the same (indifferentism). Participation in the rituals of other religions is a form of indifferentism and, therefore, is also an act against faith. Heresy, apostasy and schism are acts against faith and violate the first commandment. (CCC 2088-2089)

- b) *Acts against hope* – which include despairing of God’s mercy, as well as presuming that God’s mercy will forgive sins without contrition and good work. These are two of the “sins against the Holy Spirit” that was discussed earlier, and they are sins against the first commandment. (CCC 2091-2092)

- c) *Acts against charity* – which include hatred of God, indifference toward Him, ingratitude to His love for us, lukewarmness and spiritual sloth. Spiritual sloth consists in a reluctance to do anything pertaining to the worship of God or God’s service. (CCC 2093-2094)

8. What else does the first commandment forbid?

The first commandment also forbids idolatry, irreligion, atheism, agnosticism, superstition and, in general, all dealings with the devil. (CCC 2110-2128)

Idolatry is the worship of idols and false gods, or the act of giving to any creature, such as a statue, an image, a man, an animal or a plant the supreme worship of adoration that belongs to God alone. The worship of the moon, the sun, the earth, the world, or the material forces of the universe, – all of which are mere creatures of Almighty God, – is also a form of idolatry and is prohibited by the first commandment.

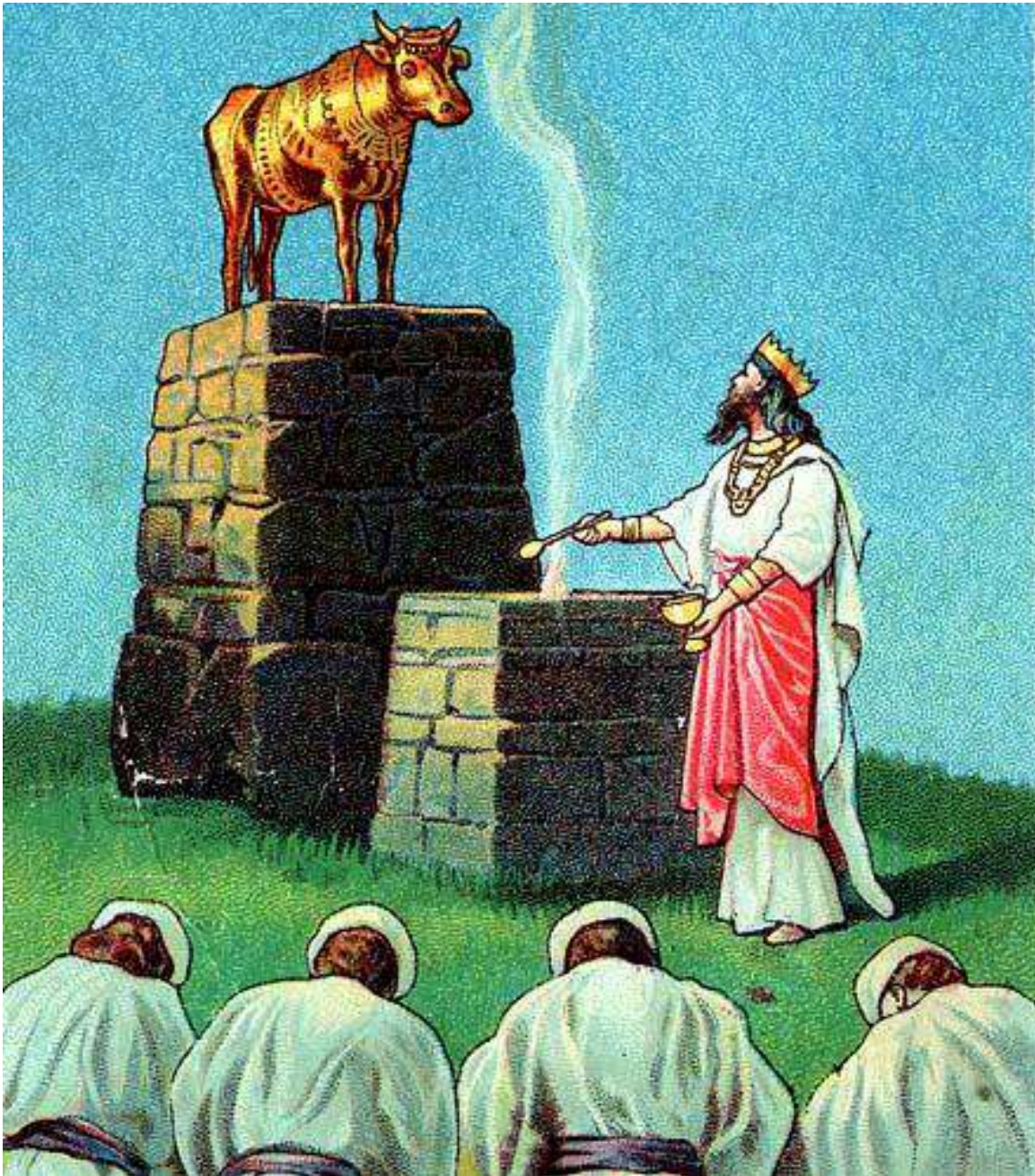


Fig 3.1.1 Jeroboam's Idolatry (1 Kgs 12:25-33)

Idolatry is not limited to the worship of creatures or created objects. Those who spend all their time in games, in their job, or in some other material pursuits, but who spend little or no time for God in prayer, are likewise guilty of “material idolatry,” because they show that they worship these mundane things more than God.

Irreligion is the lack of reverence, if not an outright hostility, toward God or religion. There are three acts that fall under this definition, all of which are against the first commandment:

- a) *Putting God's goodness or power to the test.* Satan was guilty of this when he challenged Christ to prove Himself the Son of God by turning the stone into bread (Luke 4:3).
- b) *Sacrilege* – is the profanation of a place, person, or thing consecrated to God and set apart for His worship. For example, vandalizing a church, stealing a sacred object (such as a chalice used in Holy Communion), etc. Actually, any lack of reverence made on something sacred, such as receiving Holy Communion with a mortal sin in the soul, is sacrilege.
- c) *Simony* – is the buying or selling of spiritual things or positions, such as the position of becoming bishop. This sin is named after Simon the magician, who thought he could obtain God's power with money (Acts 8:9-24). The buying and selling of religious articles itself is not simony. But buying and selling blessed objects *on account of their being blessed*, is simony. When a blessed object is sold, the blessing becomes void, and the object needs to be brought to the priest again for a blessing.

Atheism is the denial of the existence of God. This is a sin against the first commandment if one has the right concept of what God is, and still rejects His existence. However, God's action in the world is so manifest that only the fool says in his heart that there is no God (Ps 14:1). **Agnosticism** is the denial of man's ability to know God's existence, so it practically ends up also to atheism.

Superstition is the act of attributing to any person, object, or action a supernatural power that it does not possess. Consulting a fortune-teller, thinking that he or she has the power to see the future, is superstition. Using a charm or a rabbit's foot, believing that it has power to bring good luck, is also a form of superstition. Likewise, using spells to avert danger or to obtain a reward, is superstition and is against the first commandment. (CCC 2111)

9. If one were to have a recourse to the devil and invoke his help, would he commit a grave sin?

Yes, because the devil is the most wicked enemy both of God and of man. The first commandment forbids making any pact with the devil to obtain knowledge and power. Those who foolishly sell their souls to the devil sometimes find themselves out of time when they realize their mistake, and end up being too late to beg God for His mercy and forgiveness.

10. Is it permissible to engage in magic?

Magic, as the simple manifestation of wonders, is permissible as a form of entertainment, provided the intervention of evil spirits is not utilized, and the entire show is performed by purely natural and clever tricks. But black magic, sorcery and witchcraft, which invoke and use the occult powers of the devil, are forbidden by the first commandment. (CCC 2116-2117)

11. Is it permissible to engage in spiritism or consult the souls of the dead?

Spiritism is the alleged practice of communicating with the souls of the dead by the use of mediums and seances. All practices of spiritism are forbidden, because they are superstitious, and often are not free from deception and/or diabolical intervention.

12. Does not the first commandment forbid the making of statues and graven images as forms of idolatry?

The first commandment forbids *worshipping* statues and images, but it does not forbid *using* statues and images in worshipping the true God. The first commandment forbids making statues and images *to be worshipped as gods*, but it does not forbid making statues as objects *to help in worshipping the true God*. In fact, God Himself commanded Moses to make a pair of cherubim for the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:18-22), and a brazen serpent as a means of helping the Israelites in the desert (Num 21:4-9). (CCC 2132)



Fig 3.1.2 The Ark of the Covenant

13. Do Catholics commit idolatry when they kneel down and pray before images and statues of Christ, Mary or the saints?

No, because we do not honor the statues and images themselves, but the persons they represent.

14. Does the first commandment forbid honoring and praying to the angels and the saints?

No, it is not forbidden to honor and invoke the angels and saints. On the contrary, we should do so, because they are God's friends and our intercessors with Him.

- 15. Since Jesus Christ is our only mediator with God, why have recourse to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin or the saints? The saints intercede for us *through the merits of Jesus Christ also*; therefore, their intercession do not negate Christ's role as our true Mediator with God.**



Fig 3.1.3 Boy Praying before a Statue of the Blessed Virgin

- 16. May we honor the relics of the saints?**

The bodies and the remains of saints who have died are called *relics*. We should honor them because their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit, and will also rise gloriously to eternal life.



Fig 3.1.4 Incorrupt Body of St. Bernadette Soubirous
The bodies, or parts of bodies, of the saints are important **relics**.

17. What is the difference between the honor we give to God and the honor we give to the saints?

The difference is that we adore God because of his infinite excellence, whereas we do not adore the saints, but only honor and venerate them as God's friends and our intercessors with Him. The honor we give to God is called *latria*, that is, the worship of *adoration*. The honor we give to the saints is called *dulia*, that is, the *veneration* of the servants of God. While the special honor we give to the Blessed Virgin is called *hyperdulia*, which is a *super-veneration* of the Mother of God.

LESSON 2 THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.”

1. What does the second commandment, forbid?

The second commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain,” forbids us: (1) To utter the name of God irreverently; (2) To blaspheme God, the Blessed Virgin or the saints; and (3) To make false, unnecessary, or unlawful oaths. (CCC 2146, 2147)

2. What is meant by, “Not to utter the name of God irreverently?”

“Not to utter the name of God irreverently” means not to mention His Holy Name, or any other name that in a special way refers to God Himself, such as the name of Jesus, of Mary and the saints, in anger or in joke or in any irreverent way whatsoever.

3. What is blasphemy?

Blasphemy is a horrible sin which consists in words or acts of contempt or malediction against God, the Blessed Virgin, the saints, or sacred things. (CCC 2148)

4. Is there any difference between blasphemy and imprecation?

There is a difference, because by blasphemy one wishes evil to or curses God, the Blessed Virgin or the saints; while by imprecation one wishes evil to or curses one's self or one's neighbor.

5. What is an oath?

An oath is the calling on God to witness the truth of what one says or promises.

6. Is it always forbidden to take an oath?

It is not always forbidden to take an oath. An oath is lawful and even gives honor to God, when it is necessary, and when one swears with truth, judgment and justice. (CCC 2154-2155)

7. When is an oath without truth?

An oath is without truth when one affirms on oath what he knows or believes to be false, or when one promises under oath to do what one has no intention of doing.

8. When is an oath without judgment?

An oath is without judgment when one makes oaths imprudently and without mature consideration, or in trivial matters.

9. When is an oath without justice?

An oath is without justice when one makes an oath to do something unjust or unlawful, as, for example, to swear to take revenge, or to steal, and so on.



Fig 3.2.1 Man Making an Oath

10. Is it a sin to swear or make an oath jestingly?

Yes. We should be careful of our speech, and not swear unnecessarily. The Lord Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said to them of old, You shall not swear falsely, but you shall perform your oaths to the Lord. But I say to you *not to swear at all*, ... let your speech be 'Yes, yes' and 'No, no;' that which is over and above these, is from the evil one” (Matt 5:33-37).

11. What sin does he commit who swears falsely?

He who swears falsely commits a mortal sin, because he grievously dishonors God, the Infinite Truth, by calling Him to witness what is false. This sin is called *perjury*. (CCC 2163)

12. If we swear to do that which is evil, are we bound to keep the oath?

No. Not only are we not obliged, but we would sin by doing such things, because a valid oath does not promote iniquity.

In the Gospel of St. Mark we have an example of a rash oath made by King Herod Antipas, who executed St. John the Baptist on the night of a sumptuous dinner party. After supper Princess Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced so delightfully that King Herod, who was very much entertained by the dance, made an oath to her and said: “Ask of me what you wish, and I will give it to you, though it be half of my kingdom.” Upon Herodias’ suggestion, Princess Salome went to the king and said, “I wish that you immediately give me the head of John the Baptist in a dish.” Although King Herod had previously refused Herodias’ request to kill St. John (who was then in prison), knowing that he was a holy prophet, he nevertheless gave the order to execute John and bring his head on a platter in order to fulfill his oath and avoid embarrassment. Princess Salome received the head of St. John in a dish and handed it to Herodias, her mother. (Mark 6:21-28).



Fig 3.2.2 Herodias with the Head of St. John the Baptist

St. John the Baptist was beheaded on account of a rash oath made by King Herod Antipas to Princess Salome

13. What does the second commandment command us to do?

The second commandment commands us to honor the Holy Name of God, to always speak with reverence of Him and His saints, as well as to keep our oaths and vows.

14. What is a vow?

A vow is a promise made to God regarding something which is good, within our power, and better than its opposite, and which we bind ourselves to fulfill just as if it had been commanded us.

15. If the keeping of a vow were to become very difficult, in whole or in part, what is to be done?

When it becomes difficult to keep a vow, in whole or in part, then one may seek commutation or dispensation from the bishop or from the pope, depending on the character of the vow.

16. Is it a sin to break a vow?

It is a sin to break a vow and therefore we should not make vows without mature reflection, nor, as a rule, without the advice of our confessor or other prudent persons, so as not to expose ourselves to the danger of sinning.

17. May vows be made to our Lady and the saints?

Vows are made to God alone. However, we may promise God to do something in honor of our Lady or the saints.

LESSON 3 THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

“Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day”

1. What does the third commandment command us to do?

The third commandment, “Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day,” commands us to honor God by acts of worship on holy days.



Fig 3.3.1 People Going to Church on Sunday

2. What are the Sabbath or holy days?

In the Old Law the Sabbath – or the days the Jews reserved for worshipping God – were Saturdays and certain other days regarded as especially solemn by the Jews. In the New Law the Sabbath are Sundays and other holy days of obligation determined by the Church.

3. What are the holy days of obligation in the U.S. besides Sundays?

In the U.S. the holy days of obligation include the following:

Jan. 1 (New Year's Day) – Solemnity of **Mary, Mother of God**

Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter – **Ascension of Christ**

Aug. 15 – The **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Nov. 1 – **All Saints Day**

Dec. 8 – The **Immaculate Conception**

Dec. 25 – **Christmas**, or the Nativity of our Lord

NOTE: When Jan. 1, Aug. 15, or Nov. 1 falls on a Saturday or Monday, the obligation to attend Mass does not apply.

4. Why is Sunday sanctified instead of Saturday in the New Law?

The Sabbath has been changed from Saturday to Sunday because it was on Sunday that our Lord rose from the dead. The Church did not just recently adopt this practice. This has been going on since the time of the Apostles. Thus, we read in the *Acts of the Apostles*: “On the first day of the week (that means, Sunday), when we were assembled to break bread (that is, to celebrate the Eucharist), Paul discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow. And he continued his speech until midnight” (Acts 20:7).

5. What act of worship is commanded us by the Church on holy days?

We are commanded by the Church to assist devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass either on the holy day or the evening of the preceding day (CIC, cann. 1247, 1248). Note that although the third commandment teaches us to sanctify the Sabbath, it is the Church that specifies when to celebrate the Sabbath, and how to sanctify it. By its First Precept the Church commands us to sanctify the Sabbath on Sundays and holy days by attending Holy Mass.

6. With what other good works does a good Catholic sanctify holy days?

A good Catholic sanctifies holy days: (1) By studying catechism, and listening to sermons or homilies; (2) By spiritual reading and reflection; (3) By devoutly receiving the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at the Sunday Mass; (4) By the practice of prayer and works of Christian charity.

7. What does the third commandment forbid?

The third commandment forbids unnecessary servile work, buying and selling, and any other works that hinder the worship of God.

8. What servile works are forbidden on holy days?

The servile works forbidden on holy days are unnecessary works that are done for pay, or works that are done to earn a living. But those who, because of poverty, misery, or social and family circumstances, cannot rest from work should still find sufficient time for God and the care of their souls.

9. What sin does one commit by doing unnecessary work on holy days?

One commits a mortal sin by doing *unnecessary* work that hinders the worship owed to God and the performance of works of mercy. However, cases of emergency will excuse from grave sin.

10. Is no servile work at all permitted on holy days?

On holy days servile works are permitted which are necessary for life, such as nursing the sick, or for the service of God, as well as those done for a grave reason. (CCC 2185)

11. What if you are required by your employer to work on Sundays and holy days?

You still have to set aside time for worship. Employers should cooperate in this regard and not make excessive demands on their employees' time. (CCC 2187)

12. Why is servile work forbidden on holy days?

Servile work is forbidden on holy days in order that we may better attend divine worship, care for our souls, and enable us to rest from toil. Light gardening and innocent recreation are not forbidden, provided ample time is also set aside for worship, prayer and reflection. (CCC 2193)

13. What else above all should we avoid on holy days?

We should avoid sin and whatever leads to sin, such as morally dangerous games, recreations and places of amusement.

LESSON 4 THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

“Honor thy father and thy mother.”

1. What does the fourth commandment command?

The fourth commandment, “Honor thy father and thy mother,” commands us to respect our parents, obey them in all that is not sinful, and assist them in their temporal and spiritual needs, especially in their old age. (CCC 2214-2220)

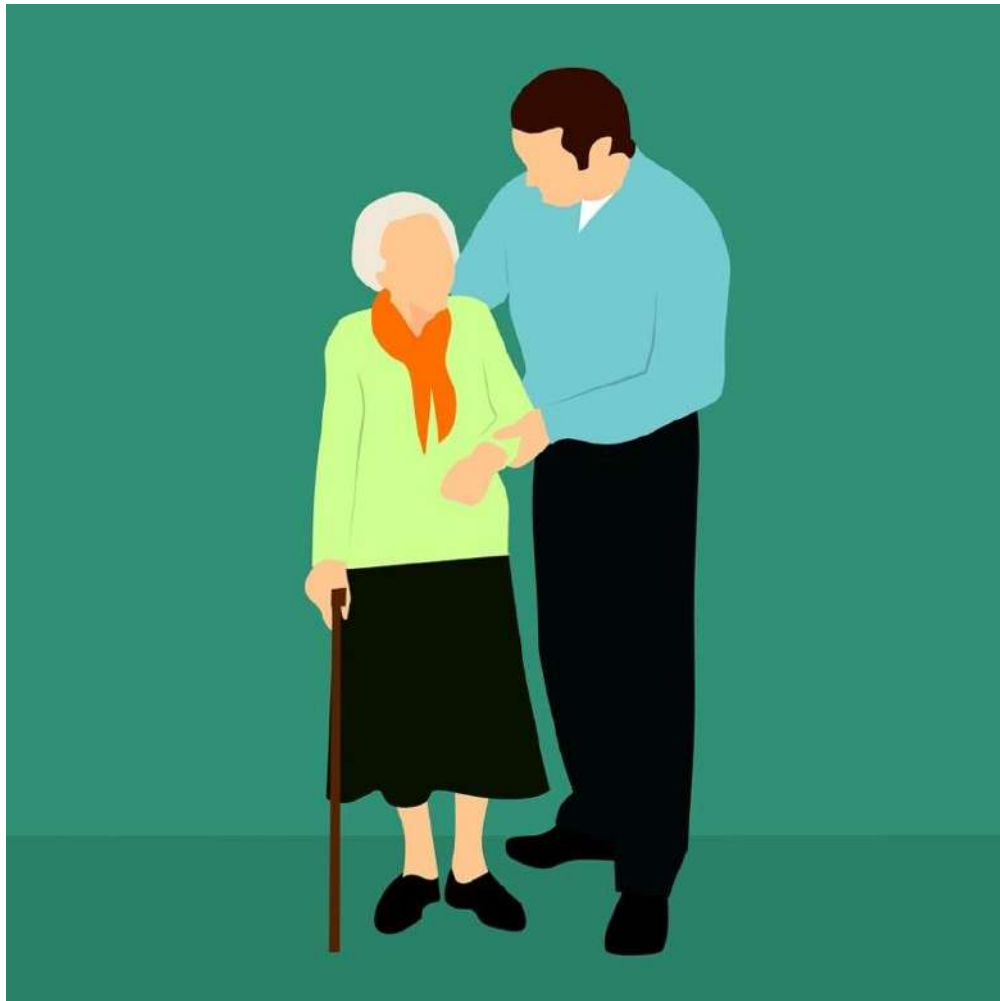


Fig 3.4.1 Caring for Aging Parents

2. What does the fourth commandment forbid?

The fourth commandment forbids us to offend our parents by word or by deed or in any other way.

3. Why does God ask us to honor our parents?

In the fourth commandment God asks us to honor our parents because we owe them our life, and they were the ones responsible for raising us and educating us. (CCC 2197)

4. Where did the authority of parents to command their children and the duty of children to obey their parents come from?

The authority of parents to command their children and the obligation of children to obey their parents, came from God who constituted and established family life in order that in it man might have the first helps that are necessary toward his spiritual and temporal well-being.

5. Have parents any duties toward their children?

Yes! Parents are bound to love, support and maintain their children; to attend to their religious and secular education; to give them good example; to keep them from the occasions of sin; to correct their faults; and to help them embrace the state to which God has called them. (CCC 2221-2231)



Fig 3.4.2 Mother Teaching her Daughter to Pray

6. Has God given us an example of a perfect family?

God gave us an example of a perfect family in the Holy Family in which Jesus Christ lived subject to the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph until His thirtieth year, that is, until He began the mission of preaching the Gospel entrusted to Him by His Eternal Father.

7. What other persons does this commandment include under the names of father and mother?

Under the names of father and mother this commandment also includes our elders and ancestors, as well as all our superiors, both ecclesiastical and lay, whom we must consequently obey and respect. Our ecclesiastical superiors include our pastors (the deacons, priests and bishops), while our lay superiors include our teachers, employers, and civil authorities. (CCC 2199)

8. Why does God command us to reverence our pastors?

God commands us to honor and reverence our pastors because they represent Christ, and because God had appointed them to be the guides and feeders of our souls (1 Tim 5:17).

9. If families were to live alone, cut off one from the other, could they provide for all their material and moral needs?

If families lived alone, cut off one from the other, they could not provide for their individual needs, and hence it is necessary that they be united in civil society so as to mutually aid one another for the common good and happiness.

10. What is civil society?

Civil society is the union of many families under the authority of a governor for the purpose of assisting each other in securing their mutual perfection and temporal happiness.

11. Whence comes the authority which rules civil society?

The authority which civil society has to rule and govern families comes from God, because all authority is from God: “there is no power but from God” (Rom 13:1).

12. Are we under any obligation to obey the authority that governs civil society?

Yes; all families and members of civil society are bound to respect and obey authority because that authority comes from God and because the common good so demands it. (CCC 2234)

13. Are all laws imposed by the civil authority to be respected?

Yes. In accordance with the command and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, all laws imposed by the civil authority are to be respected, provided they are not contrary to the law of God. If civil authority commands us to do anything sinful, then like St. Peter and the Apostles, we must answer and say: “We ought to obey God, rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

LESSON 5 THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not kill.”

1. What does the fifth commandment forbid?

The fifth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” forbids us to kill, strike, wound or do any other bodily harm to our neighbor, either by ourselves alone or with others. It also forbids hating our neighbor, wishing him evil or offending him by insulting or injurious language.

2. Why is it a grave sin to kill one's neighbor?

It is a grave sin to kill one’s neighbor because (1) the slayer unjustly invades the right which God alone has over the life of a person; (2) he disturbs the peace and destroys the security of civil society; and (3) he deprives his neighbor of life, which is the greatest natural good on earth. (CCC 2268-2269)



Fig 3.5.1 Killing an innocent person is *murder*.

3. Are there cases in which it is lawful to kill?

It is lawful to kill when fighting a just war; when carrying out a sentence of death in punishment of a crime (capital punishment); and in cases of necessary and lawful self-defense against an unjust aggressor. However, unnecessary killing and the murder of innocent people are forbidden even in a just war. (CCC 2263-2267)

4. Does God also forbid us in the fifth commandment to do harm to the spiritual life of another?

Yes, in the fifth commandment God also forbids us to do harm to another's spiritual life by *scandal*.



Fig 3.5.2 A Millstone Hanged about the Neck

Christ said, “But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believes in me, it would be better for him that a millstone should be hanged around his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt 18:6).

5. What is scandal?

Scandal is any word, act, or omission which gives an occasion for another person to commit sin. For example, when you tell immodest stories to a child, you are giving that child an occasion to commit sin and harm his or her soul. Even if the child did not sin on account of your stories, you have committed a grave sin of scandal because you endangered the child's soul. If harming the body is forbidden by the fifth commandment, so is harming the soul. (CCC 2284)

6. Is scandal a grave sin?

Scandal is a grave sin because, by causing the loss of souls, it tends to oppose the greatest work of God, which is the salvation of souls. It effects the death of another person's soul by depriving it of the life of grace, which is more precious than the life of the body, and is the source of a multitude of sins. Hence God threatens the severest chastisement to those who give scandal, especially to the young. (CCC 2285)

7. Why does God, in the fifth commandment, forbid the taking of one's own life or suicide?

God forbids suicide, because man is not the master of his own life any more than he is of the life of another.

8. Is direct abortion also forbidden by the fifth commandment?

Abortion is a medical procedure that results in the death of an unborn child. If the death of the child is directly intended, then it is called *direct abortion*, and is NOT permitted. This procedure is forbidden by the fifth commandment even to save the mother's life. However, if the death of the child results merely as an unintended effect, and every precaution is taken to safeguard the child, then this is a case of *indirect abortion*, and may be allowed for a grave reason. But direct abortion, or the direct killing of an unborn child, is nothing else but *murder*. (CCC 2270-2275)

9. Is mercy killing or *euthanasia* also forbidden by the fifth commandment?

Yes, “mercy killing,” or the practice of killing a person to relieve him of pain, is forbidden by the fifth commandment. However, the use of painkillers is permitted even if they hasten death of the patient as an unintended effect. But equally forbidden is the direct killing of defective, moronic, or incapacitated individuals on the excuse of mercy. Even the government has no right to take the life of innocent people. (CCC 2276-2279)

10. What else is forbidden by the fifth commandment?

Other acts forbidden by the fifth commandment are those that cause injury to our bodies or minds, such as excessive eating or drinking, substance or drug abuse, and bodily *mutilation*. (CCC 2290-2291)

11. What is bodily mutilation?

Bodily mutilation is the direct destruction or removal of any part of the body. This is forbidden unless it is the only way to save or preserve the life of a person. It is also forbidden even if it is done for purposes of experimentation or research. Examples of bodily mutilation forbidden by the fifth commandment include *vasectomy* and *tubal ligation*, which are sometimes done to prevent pregnancy. (CCC 2295, 2297)

12. What does the fifth commandment command?

The fifth commandment commands us to forgive our enemies, wish them well and avoid war. (CCC 2307-2308)

13. What should he do who has injured another in the life of either body or soul?

He who has injured another must not only confess his sin, but must also repair the harm by compensating his neighbor for the loss he has sustained, by retracting the errors taught, and by giving good example.

Anger, Hatred and Revenge



Fig 3.5.3 Christ Driving the Merchants out of the Temple

14. What is anger?

Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure, accompanied by a desire to punish the offender. To be unjustly angry with another person is always a sin against the fifth commandment. But when anger is justified, then it is not a sin. For example, Christ was justly angry at the money changers in the Temple, because they had converted the Temple, which was a house of prayer, into a den of thieves (Matt 21:13). So he overturned their tables, made a scourge of little cords and drove them all out away (John 2:15).

15. What is hatred?

Hatred is a strong dislike of or ill-will toward someone. It is like a habitual anger because he who hates someone sees nothing good in that person. It is not a sin to hate the evil qualities of others; but we must be careful *to hate only the sin, not the sinner*.

16. What is revenge?

Revenge is a desire to inflict excessive punishment on someone who has injured us, from a motive of anger or hatred. It is a sin against the fifth commandment because it is unfair. It is not wrong to punish an offender, but the punishment must be justly proportionate to the offence. We must keep in mind that the purpose of punishment is not to inflict pain or injury, but to correct the offender. If the punishment is excessive because it is vengeful, the offender will likely retaliate and reject the correction, thus defeating the purpose of the punishment.

LESSON 6 THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

1. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

The sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” forbids every act, every look and every word contrary to chastity. It also forbids infidelity in marriage.

2. Is impurity a great sin?

It is a most grave and abominable sin in the sight of God and man; it lowers man to the condition of the brute. It drags him into many other sins and vices, and it provokes the most terrible chastisements from God both in this world and in the next. Thus, God destroyed the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah precisely on account of their sins of impurity (Jude 1:7).

3. How are the sixth and ninth commandments related?

The sixth commandment commands us to be chaste and modest *exteriorly*, that is, in actions, in look and in speech. In addition the ninth commandment commands us to be chaste and pure *interiorly*, that is, in mind and in heart.

4. What does the sixth commandment forbid?

The sixth commandment forbids divorce, adultery, fornication, masturbation, sodomy, homosexual acts, the use of artificial means of birth control, pornography, prostitution, rape, and any other form of immodesty in dress, speech and actions.

Divorce – is the claim to break the marriage bond that binds husbands and wives together. This is a grave offense against the sixth commandment even if it is recognized by civil law. (CCC 2384-2385)

Adultery – is the unfaithfulness of a married person who is having an affair (sex) with someone other than his or her spouse.

Fornication – is a sexual union between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman. If one partner is married, then the sin is called adultery, not fornication. The common practice of many people today who live together without being married, or prior to being married, is a case of fornication and, therefore, prohibited by the sixth commandment. Young men and women should wait until they are married before they sleep together. Women often do not realize that men respect them more when they show restraint and self-respect. (CCC 2353)



Fig 3.6.1 The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18 – 19)

Masturbation – is the stimulation of the sexual organs in order to derive sexual pleasure. When performed deliberately, whether alone or with others, *it is always a mortal sin* (CCC 2352).

Sodomy – is any sexual activity between two individuals that cannot naturally result in the generation of an offspring. Examples of sodomitic activities are anal or oral copulation. Sexual activity between a person and a beast is called **bestiality**, and is a gross form of sodomy.

Homosexual acts are sexual activities *between two people of the same sex*. Since these acts could not naturally result in an offspring, they are also a special form of sodomy. Homosexual men are called *gays*; homosexual women are called *lesbians*. Homosexual acts between gays or between lesbians are sinful because they are intrinsically disordered acts (CCC 2357).

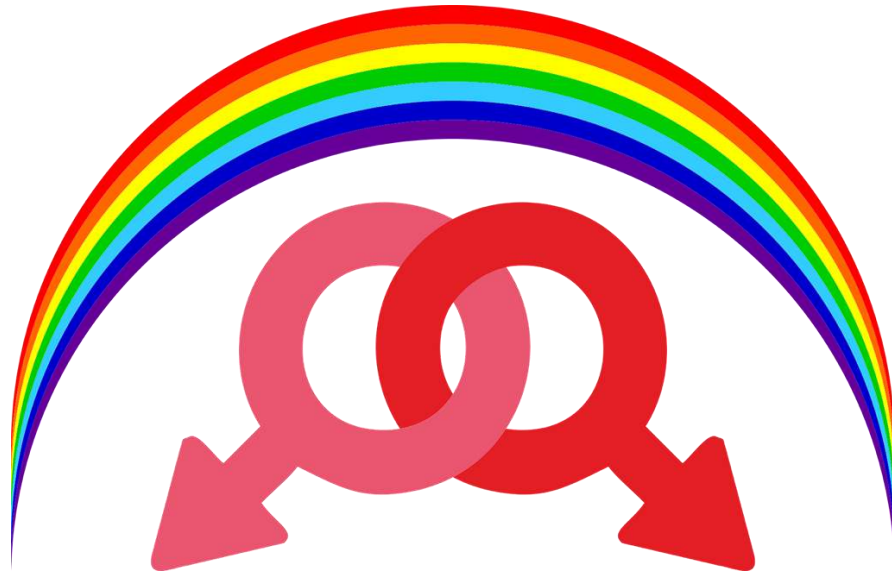


Fig 3.6.2 Some Emblems Used by Homosexuals

The Use of Artificial Means of Birth Control – is the practice of utilizing artificial devices (condoms, pills or drugs), that are designed to prevent conception. This practice is immoral and unnatural, because it frustrates the purpose of the sexual act by artificially blocking what the sexual act would naturally accomplish without those devices, and that is, the generation of an offspring.

Prostitution – is the practice of engaging in sexual activity with someone for payment. (CCC 2355)

Rape – is a sexual act carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against a person’s will, or with a person who is incapable of valid consent because of immaturity, mental illness, intoxication, or deception. (CCC 2356)

Pornography – is the production of printed, audible and/or visual materials (sound records, photos, videos, magazines, etc.) that explicitly display sexual organs or activities for the purpose of exciting sexual pleasure to third parties (readers, hearers and viewers). All who promote pornography – the producers, the actors, cameramen, advertisers, financiers, etc. – commit a grave sin against the sixth commandment. (CCC 2354)

Immodesty in behavior, speech or dress – refers to any act, speech or manner of dressing that leads to unlawful sexual pleasure. Immodest games, immodest stories, and immodest fashions, besides being forbidden by the sixth commandment, could also cause scandal when carried out around young people.

5. Are homosexual acts normal?

No, because they are *unnatural*. Saying that homosexual acts are unnatural does not mean that they do not happen in nature, but that they do not conform with *the intent that God has in nature*. “Male and female He created them,” the Bible says (Gen 1:27). This means that it is the Creator’s will that male should mate with female, not male with another male, nor female with another female. The intent of the Creator in inventing sex is to preserve the species through the procreation of offspring, and this only happens in a relation involving male and female. No offspring can result from the sexual activity of two males or two females. Therefore, homosexual acts do not conform with the order or intent of God in nature and are both unnatural and abnormal.

6. Are homosexual acts sinful?

Yes, because they are *intrinsically disordered acts*; that is, they violate the natural order established by God, that sexual activity should only be between male and female, so that the procreation of offspring can be made possible. Some people have argued that homosexuality is natural and, therefore, not sinful because some lower animals have been observed to engage also in so-called “homosexual” behavior. But in many cases the homosexual nature of these animal acts are only apparent rather than real. Many animals do these for purely sexual gratification. And their behavior is not necessarily the pattern on which human behavior should be modeled. For example, brute animals frequently engage in sex without asking the consent of the female. Should humans do the same? Of course, not. Therefore, animal behavior should not be used as a model for human behavior, for brute animals do not know better. Unlike lower animals, human beings have a rational nature that can perceive and respect God’s will in nature. Unlike brute animals, we are aware that sex has a more noble purpose than purely sexual gratification, and that is procreation. Therefore, in man all sexual activities must be controlled by reason.

7. Are homosexual tendencies normal?

No. If homosexual acts are not normal, neither are homosexual tendencies. There is no scientific proof yet that anyone is born gay. But even those who feel that they were born with homosexual tendencies still have the responsibility to live a chaste life.

8. Are homosexual tendencies and desires likewise sinful?

Yes, because they are directed against the end intended by the Creator. However, homosexual desires are more against the ninth commandment rather than the sixth commandment. But like all unnatural tendencies, homosexual tendencies can be controlled, and human beings ought to be masters, rather than slaves, of their passions.

9. What should be our attitude toward homosexuals?

We should treat them with respect and compassion. Hate the sin (homosexual acts), but not the sinner. Even homosexual persons are called to live a life of chastity and control their unnatural tendencies. (CCC 2357-2359)

10. What does the sixth commandment command?

The sixth commandment commands us to be chaste and modest in act, in look, in behavior and in speech.

11. What must we do to observe the sixth commandment?

To observe the sixth commandment, we ought to pray often; be devoted to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of purity; meditate often on the passion of Jesus Christ; guard our senses; and frequent the sacraments with the proper dispositions. In addition we must keep ourselves chaste by avoiding idleness, bad companions, books and magazines that glorify sex, indecent videos, TV shows and pornographic websites, dangerous conversations, and all other occasions of sin.

LESSON 7 THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not steal.”

1. What does the seventh commandment forbid?

The seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” forbids all unjust taking and all unjust keeping of what belongs to another, and also every other way of cheating our neighbor in his exterior or interior goods. The seventh commandment also forbids any act or business dealings that treat people, particularly women and children, like marketable merchandise. The buying, selling, or trading of people lead to *slavery*, and they rob people, not only of their external goods, but also of their spiritual dignity and worth as human beings. (CCC 2414)

2. What is meant by stealing?

Stealing is taking another's goods unjustly and against the owner's will, when the owner has every reason and right to be unwilling to be deprived of them. This is done in two ways: by theft and by robbery. **Theft** is committed by taking another's goods secretly. **Robbery** is committed by taking another's goods openly and with violence.

3. Why is it forbidden to steal?

Because stealing is an offense against justice and violates another person's *right to property*, that is, the right of every person to own what he or she acquired by work, by gift or by inheritance.

4. Are a person's properties exclusively for himself alone?

No, because the goods of this earth are destined for the benefit of humanity. So, those who own properties over and above what they need, also have a responsibility to share their properties to others in great need. (CCC 2404)



Fig 3.7.1 Boys Stealing Apples

Question for discussion: When would stealing apples not be sinful?

5. Are there cases when another's goods can be taken without sin?

Yes, when the owner consents, or when the owner unjustly refuses to share his goods to someone in extreme necessity. Since the goods of this earth are destined to benefit humanity, a person in extreme need may take another's goods without sin, provided that he takes only so much as is absolutely necessary to relieve pressing and extreme need. (CCC 2408)

6. Is it only by theft and robbery that another can be injured in his property?

He can also be injured by fraud, usury, bribery, undue taxation, gambling and any other act of injustice directed against his goods.

7. How is fraud committed?

Fraud is committed in trade by deceiving another by false weight, money or by bad goods; by falsifying writings and documents; by deceit in buying and selling or in contracts in general, as well as by refusing to pay what is just and agreed upon.

8. How is usury committed?

Usury is committed by exacting excessive interest for money lent, thus taking an unfair advantage of another's need or ignorance.

9. How is bribery committed?

Bribery is committed by offering (or receiving) money or other forms of inducement to obtain (or to grant) favor dishonestly. This is committed, for example, by public officials who, in consideration for money received, allow any wrong-doing to go unpunished. Both the person who offered money, and the one who received money unjustly, are guilty of the sin of bribery.

10. What is undue taxation?

Undue taxation is the act of unjustly or unnecessarily collecting taxes from, but without a proportionate benefit to, the citizens.

11. What is gambling, and why is it against the seventh commandment?

Gambling is the act of playing a game of chance by the use of money that one cannot afford to lose. Betting in a game of chance may sometimes be permitted if done merely to add fun to the game. However, this is dangerous if not controlled. Thus, betting large sums of money, especially money that is needed to support one's family, is sinful, because it exposes the family to the risk of great and unnecessary loss of its financial support. (CCC 2413)

12. What other sorts of injustice may be committed with regard to another's goods?

By unjustly causing another person to lose what he has; by not working as duty requires; by maliciously refusing to pay debts, or defrauding laborers their wage; by damaging property held in custody; by preventing another from making just gains; by aiding thieves; and by receiving, concealing or buying stolen goods.

13. Is it a grave sin to steal?

It is a grave sin against justice when the matter is grave; for it is most important for the good of individuals, of families, and of society that each one's right to his property should be respected.

14. When is stolen matter grave?

When that which is taken is considerable; also when serious loss is inflicted on another by taking something that in itself is of little value, such as stealing a professor's eyeglasses or an old man's cane.

15. What does the seventh commandment command?

The seventh commandment commands us to respect, not only the goods and properties of other people, but also the integrity of all creation. Plants and animals are also destined to benefit humanity; so the seventh commandment also enjoins us to care for them as their good stewards. (CCC 2415-2418)

16. What does the seventh commandment command employers and employees?

The seventh commandment commands employees to do their work diligently in return for payment received. Failure to do diligent work is a form of stealing. Likewise, the seventh commandment commands employers to give their employees a *just wage*. A fair or just wage is not merely one that complies with the law, or one based merely on the market value of labor, but also one that provides the laborer a dignified livelihood for himself and his family. (CCC 2434)

17. Is it enough for one who has sinned against the seventh commandment to confess his sin?

It is not enough for one who has sinned against the seventh commandment merely to confess his sin; he must also do his best to restore what belongs to others, and to repair the loss he has caused by his sin. (CCC 2412)

18. What is meant by repairing the losses caused?

Repairing the losses caused refers to the compensation that must be made to another for the goods or profits lost owing to the theft or other acts of injustice committed to his detriment.

19. To whom must stolen property be returned?

To him from whom it has been stolen; to his heirs, if he is dead; or if this is really impossible the value of it should be given to the poor or to some charity.

20. What should one do who finds something of great value?

He should diligently seek the owner and faithfully return it to him.

LESSON 8 THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

1. What does the eighth commandment forbid?

The eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor,” forbids false testimony in a court of justice, and it also forbids backbiting, detraction, calumny, flattery, rash judgment and suspicion, and every sort of lying.



Fig 3.8.1 Revealing the Hidden Faults of Others by Gossiping is Sinful

2. What is detraction or backbiting?

Detraction or backbiting is speaking ill of someone behind his back. It is a secret staining of another person's good name.

3. What is calumny?

Calumny is a sin which consists in maliciously attributing to another faults and defects which he did not possess. (CCC 2477)

4. What is flattery?

Flattery is a sin which consists in deceiving another by falsely praising him or others for the purpose of profiting thereby.

5. What is rash judgment or rash suspicion?

Rash judgment or rash suspicion is a sin which consists in judging or suspecting evil of others without sufficient foundation. It is a sin because it robs our neighbor of his good name. Holy Scripture says, "Do not judge, that you may not be judged" (Matt 7:1).

6. What is a lie?

A lie is asserting as true what one believes to be false, with the intention of deceiving. Lying is bearing false witness and, when done under oath, is called *perjury*. (CCC 2476, 2482-2483)

7. How many kinds of lies are there?

There are three kinds: The jocose lie, the officious lie, and the malicious lie.

A **jocose lie** is that which is told as a joke and without injury to anyone.

An **officious lie** is a false statement to benefit oneself or another without hurting anyone else.

A **malicious lie** is a false statement made to hurt someone or his good name.

8. Is it ever lawful to tell a lie?

It is never lawful to tell a lie, neither in joke, nor for one's own benefit, nor for the benefit of another, because to lie is always a bad act in itself. To lie is to be a child of the devil, “for he (the devil) is a liar, and the father of liars” (John 8:44). Lying through the social media, such as by spreading “fake news,” to gain an advantage or to advance a political agenda, is a great evil because of the great number of people who are being misled by the false information. (CCC 2493-2499)

9. What kind of sin is a lie?

A lie when jocose or officious is a venial sin; but any lie, including a jocose lie, may be a mortal sin depending on the intentions of the speaker, the circumstances of time, place and person affected by the lie, as well as by the gravity and *nature* of the injury caused by the lie itself. For example, an injury done to one's good name could be more hurtful than an injury done to one's property. (CCC 2484-2485)

10. Is it always necessary to say all one's mind?

It is not always necessary, especially when he who questions you has no right to know what he demands. We must always say the truth, only the truth, and nothing but the truth; but we do not always need to tell the whole truth, especially with regard to matters that have been entrusted to us confidentially. (CCC 2491)

11. Is it enough for him who has sinned against the eighth commandment to confess the sin?

It is not enough for him who has sinned against the eighth commandment to confess the sin; he is also obliged to retract whatever he said when calumniating another, and *to repair as far as he can* the harm he has done to another person's property, reputation or good name. (CCC 2487)

12. What does the eighth commandment command us to do?

The eighth commandment commands us to speak the truth at the proper time and place, and, as far as we can, to put a good interpretation upon the actions of our neighbor. Above all, the eighth commandment also commands us to bear witness *to the truth of our faith*. (CCC 2472-2474)

LESSON 9 THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not covet another’s wife.”

1. What does the ninth commandment forbid?

The ninth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet another’s wife,” expressly forbids every desire contrary to that fidelity which husband and wife vowed to observe when contracting marriage. It also forbids every thought or desire of anything that is prohibited by the sixth commandment.



Fig 3.9.1 Infidelity and Immodest Desires

Thinking or desiring of having an affair with someone other than your spouse is against the ninth commandment.

2. Is impurity in thought or desire a great sin?

It is a most grave and abominable sin in the sight of God and man because it lowers man to the condition of the brute. Christ said, “You have heard that it was said to them of old: *You shall not commit adultery*. But I say to you that whoever shall look on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt 5:27-28).

3. Is every thought that comes into the mind against purity a sin?

The thoughts that come into the mind against purity are not of themselves sins, but rather temptations and incentives to sin.

4. When is a bad thought or desire a sin?

Bad thoughts, even though resulting in no bad deed, are sins when we culpably entertain them, or consent to them, or expose ourselves to the proximate danger of consenting to them.

5. Are homosexual thoughts and desires also sinful?

Yes, because they are directed toward an end not intended by the Creator. Homosexual thoughts and desires are against the ninth commandment and are also sins against purity.

6. What do the sixth and ninth commandments command?

The sixth commandment commands us to be chaste and modest *exteriorly*, that is, in acts, in looks, in behavior, and in speech. In addition the ninth commandment commands us to be chaste and pure *interiorly*, that is, in mind and in heart.

7. What must we do to observe the ninth commandment?

To observe the ninth commandment we need to do pretty much the same things as was recommended to observe the sixth commandment: we ought to pray to God often; be devoted to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of purity; meditate on the passion of Jesus Christ; guard our senses; practice Christian mortification; and frequent the sacraments with the proper dispositions. Note, too, that the battle for purity is not merely an individual effort, but requires the purification of the social climate. (CCC 2525-2526)

8. What must we avoid in order to keep our hearts chaste?

To keep our hearts chaste we must avoid idleness, bad companions, the reading of bad books and magazines, watching indecent pictures, TV shows and pornographic websites, engaging in dangerous conversations, and all other occasions of sin.

LESSON 10 THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.”

1. What does the tenth commandment forbid?

The tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods,” forbids the wish to deprive another of his goods and the wish to acquire goods by unjust means.

2. Why does God forbid the undue desire of another's goods?

God forbids the unregulated desire of another's goods, because He wishes us to be just even in thought and will, and to hold ourselves completely aloof from unjust acts. A feeling of *envy* in the good fortune of others is dangerous, and must be banished from the heart. (CCC 2538-2540)

3. What does the tenth commandment command?

The tenth commandment commands us to be satisfied with the state in which God has placed us, and to bear poverty patiently. God rewards the poor in spirit, saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. (Matt 5:3)

4. Is there a relation between the tenth and seventh commandment?

Yes. The seventh commandment requires our *exterior* acts to be respectful of the properties of others, and not to steal them or damage them for no reason. The tenth commandment requires our *interior* acts (thoughts and desires) to be respectful of the properties of others. Thus, the *act* of stealing is against the seventh commandment. But the *thought* of stealing is against the tenth commandment.



Fig 3.10.1 The Tenth Commandment

It is not forbidden to desire what other people have, but it is forbidden to think or desire of *depriving them* of what is theirs. (CCC 2537)

5. How can a Christian be content in a state of poverty?

A Christian can be content in a state of poverty by reflecting that our greatest good is a pure and peaceful conscience; that our true home is Heaven; and that Jesus Christ made Himself poor for love of us and has promised a special reward to those who bear poverty patiently. (CCC 2544-2547)

LESSON 11 THE PRECEPTS OF THE CHURCH

1. Besides the commandments of God what else must we observe?

Besides the commandments of God, we must also observe the precepts of the Church.

2. Are we obliged to obey the Church?

Undoubtedly we are obliged to obey the Church, because Jesus Christ Himself commands us to do so: “He that hears you hears Me, and he that despises you despises Me, and he that despises Me despises Him that sent Me” (Luke 10:16)

3. Is it a sin to transgress a precept of the Church?

Knowingly to transgress a precept of the Church in grave matter is a mortal sin.

4. What are the Precepts of the Church?

The Precepts of the Church are the following (CCC 2042-2043):

1. To attend Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation;
2. To confess our sins at least once a year;
3. To receive Holy Communion during the Easter time;
4. To keep all holy days of obligation holy;
5. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.

NOTES:

- **On the first precept:** This precept has been discussed in relation to the third commandment. For details, review Lesson 3 above.
- **On the second precept:** Although the second precept only requires going to confession once a year, it is good practice and highly recommended to go to confession *once a month*, especially if you receive Holy Communion every Sunday or

holy day of obligation. Also, make it a point to go to confession **as soon as possible** when you are conscious of having committed a mortal sin.

- **On the third precept:** In the U.S. the obligation to receive Holy Communion during the Easter season, sometimes called the “Easter duty,” can be fulfilled from the First Sunday of Lent until Trinity Sunday.
- **On the fourth precept:** Like the first precept, this one has been discussed in connection with the third commandment.
- **On the fifth precept:** This precept will be discussed more thoroughly in questions 6 - 9 below.
- Although not presented as a precept, the faithful also have the duty to provide for the material necessities of the Church, each according to his abilities (CIC, can. 222).

5. Why does the Church have to make the first and fourth precepts when God has already given the third commandment?

The third commandment only commands us to keep the sabbath holy. However, it is the Church that determines by its first precept that the Sabbath is to be observed on Sunday rather than Saturday, and that the best way to sanctify the Sabbath is by attending Holy Mass, studying catechism, spiritual reading, etc. Likewise, it is the Church that determines the holy days of obligation, which must be observed like Sundays. Although these have been discussed in connection with the third commandment, these holy days of obligation have been determined by the Church and commanded to be kept holy by its fourth precept.

6. What does the law of abstinence forbid?

The law of abstinence forbids consuming meat from mammals and birds, but not eggs, butter, cheese and meatless soups (such as chicken broth), although these are derived from meat. Veggies and, in general, seafood (fish, shrimp, etc.) are permitted.



Fig 3.11.1 An example dish for a day of abstinence

7. Who are required to abstain, and when is abstinence to be observed?

In the U.S. everyone from age 14 and up must abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays of Lent, except when a solemnity falls on a Friday. The Fridays outside the season of Lent are *days of penance* (CIC, can. 1250), but not necessarily days of abstinence. Therefore, although abstinence from meat is a recommended form of penance even on Fridays outside Lent, one may instead do corporal or spiritual works of mercy for penance.

8. What does the law of fasting command?

The law of fasting requires all Catholics to have only one regular meal, but allows 2 smaller meals that together do not equal one regular meal.

9. Who are required to fast, and when is fasting to be observed?

In the U.S. everyone from age 18 until age 59 must fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (CIC, can. 1251).

Picture Credits / Sources

Fig 3 The Holy Family

Artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bartolomé_Esteban_Perez_Murillo_003.jpg

Fig 3.0.1 Moses Carrying the Two Tables of Stone

http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Moses_001.jpg

Fig 3.0.2 Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise

Artist: Gustave Doré (1832-1883)

The original drawing is in black and white. I adjusted the colors.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adam_and_Eve_Driven_out_of_Eden.png

Fig 3.1.1 Jeroboam's Idolatry (1 Kgs 12:25-33)

Source: Providence Lithograph Co., 1904.

Fig 3.1.2 The Ark of the Covenant

http://www.marysrosaries.com/collaboration/index.php?title=File:Ark_of_the_Covenant_001.jpg

Fig 3.1.3 Boy Praying before a Statue of the Blessed Virgin

The Pinterest button below the image indicates that the image may be shared for non-commercial use.

https://www.zazzle.com/vintage_little_boy_praying_to_blessed_virgin_mary_classic_round_sticker-217185410200771414?rf=238877146116362811&social=true&tc=pinterest

Fig 3.1.4 Incorrupt Body of St. Bernadette Soubirous

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bernadette_Soubirous-sarcophagus-2.jpg

Fig 3.2.1 Man Making an Oath

Designed by Luis Molinero / Freepik

https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/handsome-man-making-oath_1206375.htm

Fig 3.2.2 Herodias with the Head of St. John the Baptist

Artist: Paul Delaroche (1797-1856)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Herodias_with_the_Head_of_St._John_the_Baptist_-_Paul_Delaroche_-_Wallraf-Richartz_Museum_-_Cologne_-_Germany_2017.jpg

Fig 3.3.1 People Going to Church on Sunday

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Halonen_Going_to_church.jpg

Fig 3.4.1 Caring for Aging Parents

Free photo from Pixabay.com.

<https://pixabay.com/illustrations/design-son-older-woman-mother-3062508/>

Fig 3.4.2 Mother Teaching her Daughter to Pray

Artist: Julius Schnorr van Carolsfeld (1794-1872)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mother_and_Daughter_in_Prayer_MET_DP804006.jpg

Fig 3.5.1 Killing an innocent person is murder.

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<http://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/cain-abel/>

Fig 3.5.2 A Millstone Hanged about the Neck

An illustration in a Portuguese catechism of 1910

<http://www.sendarium.com/p/catecismo-ilustrado-de-1910.html>, #41

Fig 3.5.3 Christ Driving the Merchants out of the Temple

Artist: Antoine-Jean-Baptiste Thomas (1791-1833)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Le_Christ_chassant_les_marchands_du_temple_-_Thomas.JPG

Fig 3.6.1 The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18 – 19)

Artist: Jacob Jacobsz, circa 1680

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sodom_and_Gomorrah_afire,_by_Jacob_Jacobsz._de_Wet_d._J.,_probably_Köln,_c._1680,_oil_on_canvas_-_Hessisches_Landesmuseum_Darmstadt_-_Darmstadt,_Germany_-_DSC01149.jpg

Fig 3.6.2 Some Emblems Used by Homosexuals

Free image from Needpix.com.

<https://www.needpix.com/photo/1011654/rainbow-homosexuality-before-marriage-same-sex-marriage-gay-gay-movement-wedding-homosexual>

Fig 3.7.1 Boys Stealing Apples

Artist: Karl Witkowski (1860-1910)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karl_Witkowski_-_Stealing_Apples.jpg

Fig 3.8.1 Revealing the Hidden Faults of Others by Gossiping is Sinful

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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/22864665@N06/15932276017/in/pool-vintagegreetingcards/>

Fig 3.9.1 Infidelity and Immodest Desires

Free Photo by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay.com

<https://pixabay.com/photos/woman-face-wall-view-eyes-228178/>

Fig 3.10.1 The Tenth Commandment

From CatholicTradition.org

<http://www.catholictradition.org/Children/commandment10.jpg>

Fig 3.11.1 An example dish during a day of abstinence

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https://unsplash.com/photos/mVZ_gjm_TOk

My Free Catechism

Book Four: Prayer and Christian Perfection

By Mr. Romeo Maria del Santo Niño, O.P.

Nihil Obstat:

Reverend Kevin J. Bobbin
Ad hoc Censor Librorum

Imprimatur:

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown

The *Nihil Obstat* and the *Imprimatur* are a declaration that a book or pamphlet is considered to be free from doctrinal or moral error. It is not implied that those who have granted the *Nihil Obstat* or *Imprimatur* agree with the contents, opinions, or statements expressed therein.

Given this 16th day of September, 2020 at the Chancery of the Diocese of Allentown.



Reverend Eugene P. Ritz
Chancellor

Alfred A. Schlert

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert
Bishop of Allentown

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This catechism is intended as a supplementary learning material for children in the upper grades, but is substantial enough to be usable also by young adults and the general public. It also aims to serve as a free resource for many average Catholics who need to learn or review what the Catholic faith teaches, but who have no time nor endurance to read the voluminous and theologically precise *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

This catechism is divided into four books; namely, Book One: *The Apostle's Creed*, Book Two: *The Sacraments*, Book Three: *The Commandments*, and Book Four: *Prayer and Christian Perfection*. The books are available in the form of pdf files that may be copied, shared, printed on paper or uploaded to children's mobile devices, iPods or computer tablets.

I did not write this catechism from scratch. To save time I made use of the questions and answers from old catechisms in the public domain, particularly the *Catechism of St. Pius X*. However, I edited, expanded and updated many of the texts to reflect current Church teachings. Color texts and illustrations, which are missing in old catechisms, were added to make the book attractive to young readers.

Many of the pictures used here are also in the public domain here in the U.S., but there are a few copyrighted ones that I took the liberty of using based on the concept of "fair use," as defined by Title 17, U.S. Code §107, for educational and non-commercial purposes. Picture credits and a link to their sources and license (when available) are given at the end of the book.

External references in the texts, such as references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) or to the *1983 Code of Canon Law* (CIC), are added mainly for the use of parents or teachers who are coaching the children in learning this catechism. However, it is hoped that through the reading of select paragraphs of the CCC, many will be encouraged to read the entire book and profit from its wealth of wisdom.

Biblical texts used in this catechism are mostly from the *Douay-Challoner Rheims* version which, because they are in the public domain, I have edited slightly just to make the English less archaic for contemporary readers. The final texts may be compared with the original text of the *Douay-Challoner-Rheims* version (link below).

Although I made this book as a lay Dominican, this book is my personal project and not the project of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic. Therefore, the ideas expressed are mine alone and do not represent the endorsement or position of the Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic or the Order of Preachers as a whole.

USEFUL LINKS

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM>

1983 Code of Canon Law (CIC – comes from the Latin title *Codex Iuris Canonici*)

http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/cic_index_en.html

Anecdotes and Examples Illustrating the Catholic Catechism

<https://archive.org/details/AnecdotesAndExamplesIllustrating/page/n5/mode/2up>

Douay-Challoner-Rheims Bible (public domain)

<http://www.drbo.org/index.htm>



Fig 4 Christ the Good Shepherd
Artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

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PART 4 PRAYER AND CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

1. What is treated of in the fourth part of this catechism?

The fourth part of this catechism (Book Four) treats of Christian perfection and the means of attaining it. Christian perfection consists in *union with God through grace*. This is chiefly attained by receiving the sacraments and observing the commandments of God and of the Church.

2. Are there other means of attaining Christian perfection in addition to receiving the sacraments and observing the commandments?

Yes. The other means of attaining Christian perfection, in addition to receiving the sacraments and observing the commandments, consist in the performance of the following:

- (1) Acts of Prayer
 - Prayer in General
 - The “Our Father” (or the Lord’s Prayer)
 - The Hail Mary (or the Angelic Salutation)
- (2) Attendance at Holy Mass
- (3) The Practice of the Virtues
- (4) Observance of the Beatitudes
- (5) Works of Mercy and other Religious Practices
- (6) Observance of the Evangelical Counsels

LESSON 1 PRAYER IN GENERAL

1. What is prayer?

Prayer is the raising of our minds and hearts to God to adore Him, to thank Him, to beg forgiveness for our sins, and to ask Him for what we need. (CCC 2559, 2562)

2. How is prayer divided?

Prayer is divided into *vocal*, *meditative*, and *contemplative* prayer. Vocal prayer is one that uses words accompanied by attention of mind and devotion of heart. Meditative prayer, or *meditation*, is one that engages mostly the powers of the mind, the imagination and reasoning, in communicating with God. Contemplative prayer is one that engages mostly the heart to establish a loving union with God. (CCC 2700-2724)

3. How else may prayer be divided?

Prayer may also be divided into *private* and *public* prayer. Private prayer is that which each one says individually for himself or for others. Public (or *communal*) prayer is that which is said together by the sacred ministers (pope, bishops, priests and deacons) in the name of the Church and by the faithful at large. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an example of public prayer. Prayer that is said in common and publicly by the faithful, in processions, pilgrimages and in the church, is also public prayer. The Holy Rosary is commonly said individually, in which case it is a private prayer. But if it is prayed in common by several persons at home, in the church or in a procession, then it becomes a public prayer.

4. Do we have a well-founded hope of obtaining by means of prayer the helps and graces that we need?

Yes, our hope of obtaining from God the graces that we need is founded on the promises of the almighty, merciful and all-faithful God, and on the merits of Jesus Christ.



Fig 4.1.1 The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an Example of Public Prayer

5. In whose name should we ask of God the graces we stand in need of?

We should ask of God the graces we stand in need of in the Name of Jesus Christ, as He Himself has taught us and as is done by the Church, which always ends her prayers with these words: “Through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

6. Why should we beg graces of God in the name of Jesus Christ?

We should beg graces of God in the Name of Jesus Christ because He is our Mediator, and it is through Him alone that we can approach the throne of God.

7. If prayer is so powerful how is it that many times our prayers are not heard?

Our prayers are always answered, but often not in the way that we expect either because we ask for things that are not good for us, or because we do not ask properly. (CCC 2735-2737)

8. Which are the chief things we should ask of God?

The chief things we should ask of God are His own glory, our eternal salvation and the means of obtaining it. It is poor practice to be always asking God only for material favors, but neglect to pray for our spiritual needs.

9. Is it not also lawful to ask of temporal goods?

Yes, it is lawful to ask God for temporal goods, but always with the condition that these be in conformity with His holy will and not a hindrance to our salvation.

10. If God knows all that is necessary for us, why should we pray?

Although God knows all that is necessary for us, He still wills that we should pray to Him so as to acknowledge Him as the Giver of every good gift, to attest our humble submission to Him, and to merit His favors for ourselves.

11. What dispositions are required in order to pray well?

The first and best disposition to render our prayers efficacious is to be in the state of grace; or if we are not in that state, to desire to put ourselves in it. We should also pray with recollection, humility, confidence, perseverance and resignation.

12. What is meant by praying with recollection?

It means remembering that we are speaking to God. Hence we should pray with all respect and devotion, as far as possible avoiding distractions, that is, thoughts not related to our prayers.

13. Do distractions lessen the merit of prayer?

Yes, when due to our attachments we ourselves bring them about, or do not promptly drive them away. But if we do all we can to be attached only to God, then our distractions do not lessen the merit of our prayer, and may even increase it. (CCC 2729)

14. What is required to pray with recollection?

Before prayer we should banish all occasions of distraction, and during prayer we should reflect that we are in God's presence.

15. What is meant by praying with humility?

It means sincerely acknowledging our own unworthiness and powerlessness, as well as *observing a respectful posture*.



Poor Praying Posture



Good Praying Posture

Fig 4.1.2 Improper and Proper Praying Posture

Note: The girl on the left is only showing us an example of poor praying posture. The picture does not represent that this is the way she actually prays in real life.

16. What is meant by praying with confidence?

It means that we should have a **firm hope** of being heard, if it is to God's glory and our own true welfare. It is not good to pray *doubting* God's generosity and goodness.

17. What is meant by praying with perseverance?

It means that we should not grow tired of praying, if God does not at once hear us, but that we should ever continue to pray with increased fervor.

18. What is meant by praying with resignation?

It means that we should conform our will to the will of God, even when our prayers are apparently not heard, because He knows better than we do what is necessary for our eternal salvation.

19. Does God always hear prayers when well said?

Yes, God always hears prayers when well said, but He answers them in the way most conducive to our eternal salvation, and not always in the way we wish.

20. What effects does prayer produce in us?

Prayer makes us recognize our dependence on God, the Supreme Lord. It makes us advance in virtue. It strengthens us against temptation. It comforts us in tribulation. It aids us in our needs. And it obtains for us the grace of final perseverance.

21. When should we especially pray?

We should especially pray when in danger, in temptation, and at the hour of death. “Pray,” Christ said, “lest you enter into temptation” (Luke 22:40).

22. How often should we pray?

We should pray often, morning and night, and when beginning the more important actions of the day. St. Paul advised us: “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thes 5:17). (CCC 2742-2743)

23. For whom should we pray?

We should pray for all. But first, for ourselves, then for our parents, siblings, relatives, friends and enemies; for the conversion of sinners, and of those outside the true Church, and for the poor souls in purgatory. “Pray for one another,” says St. James, “for the continual prayer of a just man avails much” (Jas 5:16).

LESSON 2 THE “OUR FATHER” (or the *Lord’s Prayer*)

1. Which is the most excellent of all vocal prayers?

The most excellent of all vocal prayers is that which Jesus Christ Himself taught us, that is to say, the *Our Father*.

2. Why is the *Our Father* the most excellent of all prayers?

Because (1) Jesus Christ Himself composed and taught it to us; (2) it contains clearly and in a few words all we can hope for from God; and (3) it is the standard and model of all other prayers.

3. Is the *Our Father* also the most efficacious of prayers?

Yes, it is also the most efficacious of prayers, because it is the most acceptable to God, since in it we pray in the very words His Divine Son has taught us.

4. Why is the *Our Father* called the Lord’s Prayer?

The *Our Father* is called the Lord’s Prayer, precisely because Jesus Christ our Lord has taught it to us with His own lips.

5. How many petitions are there in the *Our Father*?

In the *Our Father* there are seven petitions preceded by an introduction.

Our Father who art in Heaven = (Introduction)

- (1) Hallowed be Thy name;
- (2) Thy Kingdom come;
- (3) Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven;
- (4) Give us this day our daily bread;
- (5) And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
- (6) And lead us not into temptation;
- (7) But deliver us from evil. Amen.

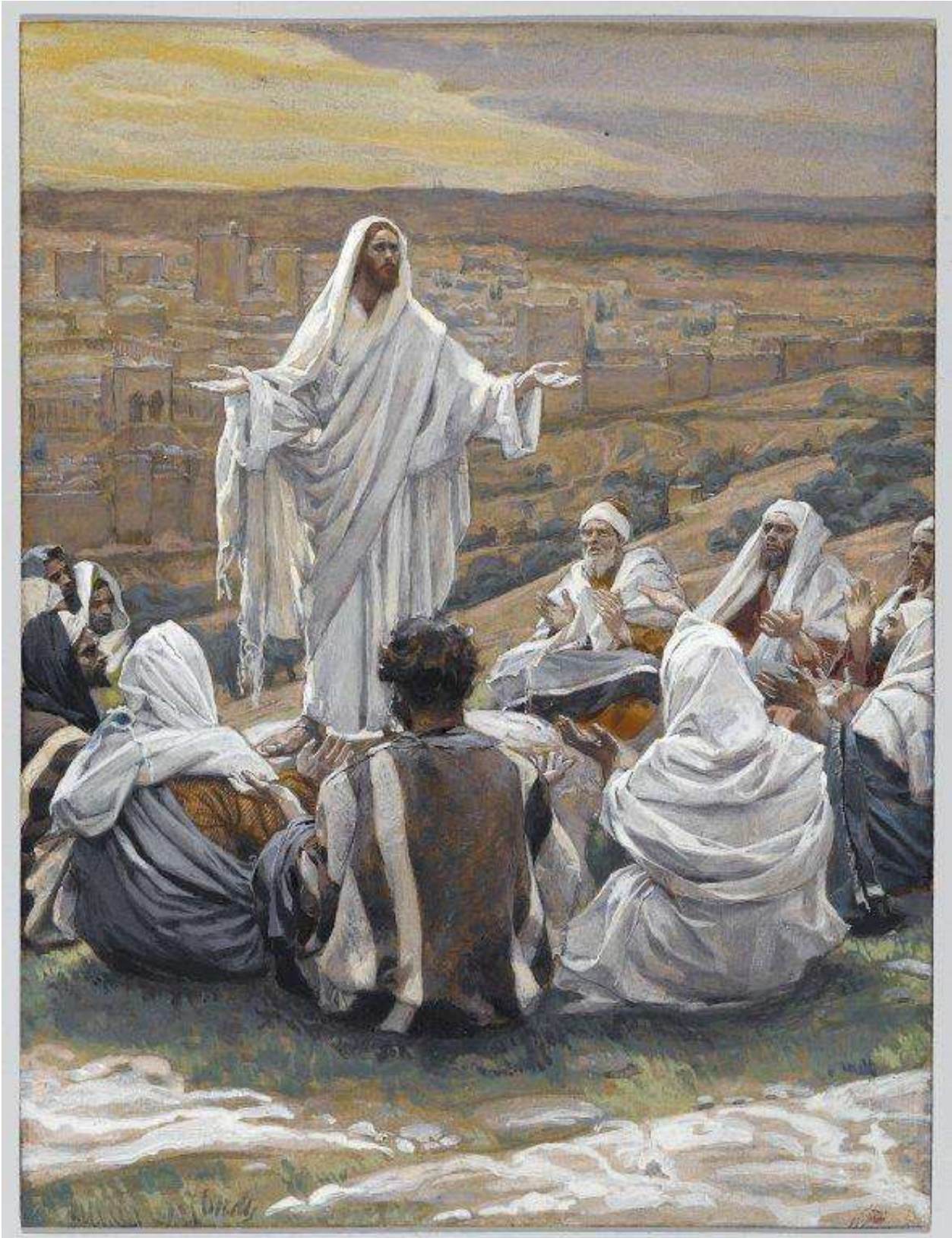


Fig 4.2.1 Christ Teaching the Apostles how to Pray the Our Father

6. When beginning the Lord’s Prayer, why do we call Him our Father?

We begin the Lord’s Prayer by calling God our Father, to foster confidence in His infinite goodness by the remembrance that we are His *adopted* children. (CCC 2782)

7. Is Heaven a place? Why do we say, “Who art in Heaven”?

Heaven is not a place in space because it is not material. Heaven is where God exists in His glory. We say, “Our Father who art in Heaven,” to raise our hearts to Heaven, that is, to where God manifests His presence and His glory in us. (CCC 2802)

8. For what do we pray when we say, “Hallowed be Thy name”?

In the first petition, “Hallowed be Thy name,” we ask our Father that His name – first revealed to Moses and then in Jesus – may be sanctified, and that He be known, loved, honored and served by the whole world and by ourselves in particular. (CCC 2810-2813)

9. For what do we pray when we say, “Thy Kingdom come”?

In the second petition, “Thy Kingdom come,” we ask the Father to reign in us by His *sanctifying grace*, by which He dwells in our souls as a King in His palace. But most of all, we hope by this prayer for His return, and look forward to His second coming as King of our Heavenly Kingdom. (CCC 2818)

10. For what do we pray when we say, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”?

In the third petition, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” we beg the grace to do the will of God in all things by obeying His commandments and following His inspirations as promptly as the angels and saints obey Him in Heaven. We also beg the grace to accept the will of God in good times and bad, so that His plan of salvation may be fulfilled in our life and in the world. (CCC 2825-2826)

11. For what do we pray when we say, “Give us this day our daily bread”?

In the fourth petition, “Give us this day our daily bread,” we beg of God all that is daily necessary for soul and body.

For our soul we ask of God the sustenance of our spiritual life, that is, we pray the Lord to give us His Body (in the Eucharist) of which we stand in continual need. *For our body* we ask all that is necessary for the support of our temporal life. (CCC 2835-2836)

We add the word “daily” because we ask only for what is necessary to life, and not an abundance of food and other goods of the earth. It also signifies that we are not too solicitous regarding the future, but that we only ask what we need at present.

12. For what do we pray when we say, “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”?

In the fifth petition, “And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” we ask God’s mercy to pardon us our sins as we pardon those who offend us. Recall the “Parable of the Unforgiving Servant” in Matt 18:23-35. (CCC 2841-2844)

13. For what do we pray when we say, “And lead us not into temptation”?

In the sixth petition, “And lead us not into temptation,” we ask God to deliver us from temptation either by not allowing us to be tempted, or by giving us grace not to be overcome by the temptation. We also ask for the Spirit of discernment, that we may distinguish between good and evil, and the grace of vigilance and final perseverance. (CCC 2846-2849)

Temptations are an incitement to sin that comes from the devil, or from the wicked, or from our own evil passions. It is not a sin to have temptations. However, it is a sin to consent to them, or to voluntarily expose oneself to the danger of consenting to them.

God sometimes allows us to be tempted so as to test our fidelity, increase our virtue, and augment our merits. To avoid temptation we should avoid dangerous companions, dangerous drinks, games, movies and TV shows, and we should pray often and receive the sacraments frequently (especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist).

14. For what do we pray when we say, “But deliver us from evil, Amen”?

In the seventh petition, “But deliver us from evil,” we ask God to show forth our victory over Satan, by freeing us from past, present and future evil, and from the greatest of all evils which is sin, and from eternal damnation, which is its penalty. (CCC 2850-2854)

We say, “Deliver us from evil,” and not, from *all evils*, because we should not pray to be exempt from all the evils of this life, but only from those which are not good for our souls. Therefore, we beg liberation from evil in general, that is, from whatever God sees would be bad for us.

It is lawful to beg liberation from some particular evil, such as sickness, poverty, etc., *but always in submission to the will of God*, who may sometimes ordain that particular affliction for the good of our soul. Such evils sometimes help us to do penance for our sins, to practice virtue (especially patience), and above all to imitate Jesus Christ in our sufferings, so as to have a greater share in His glory.

To obtain the graces asked in the *Our Father* we must recite it without haste and with attention. We should say the *Our Father* every day and often, because every day we need God’s help.

The “Amen” at the end of the *Our Father* means “So be it” or “Thus do I pray.” (CCC 2856)

LESSON 3 THE “HAIL MARY” (or the *Angelic Salutation*)

1. What prayer do we usually pray after the Our Father?

After the *Our Father* we usually say the *Angelic Salutation*, that is, the “Hail Mary,” through which we have recourse to the Blessed Virgin.

2. Why is the “Hail Mary” called the *Angelic Salutation*?

The Hail Mary is called the *Angelic Salutation*, because it begins with the salutation addressed by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary.



Fig 4.3.1 The Angel Gabriel Appeared to Mary (The Annunciation)

And the angel said to her: “*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*” (Luke 1:28).

3. Whose words are those of the “Hail Mary”?

The words of the Hail Mary are partly the angel Gabriel’s, partly St. Elizabeth’s, and partly the Church’s.

4. Which are the words of the angel Gabriel?

The words of the angel Gabriel are the beginning words: “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.” (Luke 1:28)

5. When was it that the angel said these words to Mary?

The angel said these words to Mary when he went to announce to her, by command of Almighty God, that God the Son would become man, and that she was to be His mother. (CCC 2676)

6. Why do we greet the Blessed Virgin with the very words of the angel?

In greeting the Blessed Virgin with the words of the angel we congratulate her by recalling to mind the singular privileges and gifts which God granted her in preference to all other creatures.

7. Which are the words of St. Elizabeth?

The words of St. Elizabeth are these: “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb” (Luke 1:42)

8. When was it that St. Elizabeth said these words?

Inspired by God, St. Elizabeth said these words when, three months before she gave birth to St. John the Baptist, she was visited by the Blessed Virgin, who already had the Baby Jesus also in her womb.

9. What do we intend by saying these words?

In saying the words of St. Elizabeth we congratulate the Blessed Virgin on her high dignity as Mother of God, and we bless God and thank Him for having given us Jesus Christ through Mary.



Fig 4.3.2 Mary Visited her Cousin Elizabeth (The Visitation)

“And she (Elizabeth) cried out with a loud voice, and said: *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb...* For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy” (Luke 1:42, 44)

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10. Whose words are the remaining words of the “Hail Mary”?

The remaining words, which begin with “Holy Mary, Mother of God, ...” have been added and used by the Church since the 15th century, but it became official during the time of Pope St. Pius V (year 1568).

11. What do we ask for in the second half of the prayer which starts with “Holy Mary, Mother of God ...”?

In the second half of the Hail Mary we beg the Blessed Virgin to protect us by her prayers during this life and especially at the hour of death, when we shall have greater need of it. (CCC 2677)

12. Why do we say the “Hail Mary” rather than any other prayer after the “Our Father”?

Because the Blessed Virgin is our most powerful advocate with Jesus Christ, and hence, after having said the prayer taught us by Jesus Christ, we pray the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us the graces we have asked therein.

13. Why is the Blessed Virgin so powerful?

The Blessed Virgin is so powerful, because, being the Mother of God, she cannot but be heard by Him. As a good Son Christ listens to His mother.

14. What do the saints teach us on devotion to Mary?

Regarding devotion to Mary the saints teach us that those who are truly devoted to her are loved and protected by her with a most tender mother’s love, and that with her help they are sure to find Jesus and obtain salvation.

15. What form of devotion to Mary does the Church recommend in a very special manner?

The devotion to the Blessed Virgin which the Church especially recommends is the Holy Rosary.

LESSON 4 ATTENDANCE AT HOLY MASS

THE ESSENCE OF THE MASS

1. Should the Holy Eucharist be considered only as a sacrament?

The Holy Eucharist, besides being a sacrament, is also the permanent Sacrifice of the New Law, which Jesus Christ left to His Church to be offered to God by the hands of His priests.

2. What in general does a sacrifice consist in?

In general, a sacrifice consists in the offering of some sensible thing to God and in some way destroying it as an acknowledgment of His supreme dominion over us and over all things.

3. What is this sacrifice of the New Law called?

It is called the Holy Mass.

4. What, then, is the Holy Mass?

The Holy Mass is the sacrifice of the Eucharist, that is, of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ offered in an unbloody manner on our altars under the appearances of bread and wine, *as thanksgiving and praise to the Father, and as a memorial of Christ and of His Mystical Body, the Church.* (CCC 1359-1372)

5. Is the sacrifice of the Eucharist the same as that of the cross?

The sacrifice of the Eucharist is substantially the same as that of the cross, for the same Jesus Christ, who offered Himself on the cross, is He who offers Himself by the hands of the priests. In addition, since the Church, as the Mystical Body of Christ, unites with Christ's offering, the sacrifice of the Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church. (CCC 1366-1368)

6. What difference and relation then is there between the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross?

Between the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross there is this difference and relation, that on the cross Jesus Christ offered Himself by shedding His blood and meriting for us; whereas on our altars His same sacrifice on the cross becomes present to us, so that we, without seeing the shedding of His blood, are able to join ourselves to it, and thereby receive the fruits of His passion and death.



Fig 4.4.1 Priest Celebrating Holy Mass

7. What other relation has the Mass to the sacrifice of the cross?

Another relation of the Mass to the sacrifice of the cross is, that the Mass makes present in a sensible way the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, because, in virtue of the words of consecration, only the Body of our Savior is made present under the species of the bread and only His Blood under the species of the wine; although by natural concomitance the living and real Jesus Christ is present under each of the species.

8. Is not the sacrifice of the cross the one only sacrifice of the New Law?

The sacrifice of the cross is the one only sacrifice of the New Law, inasmuch as through it Our Lord satisfied Divine Justice, acquired all the merits necessary to save us, and thus, on His part, fully accomplished our redemption. However, He applies these merits to us through the means instituted by Him in His Church, among which is the Mass, the sacrifice of the Eucharist.

9. For what ends then is the sacrifice of the Eucharist offered?

The sacrifice of the Eucharist is offered to God for four ends: (1) To honor Him properly; (2) *To thank Him* for His favors (Note: “eucharist” means thanksgiving); (3) To appease Him and make due satisfaction for our sins, and to help the souls in purgatory; and (4) To obtain all the graces necessary for us. (CCC 1360)

10. Who is it that offers to God the sacrifice of the Eucharist?

The principal Offeror of the sacrifice of the Eucharist is Jesus Christ, while the priest is the minister who *in the person of Jesus Christ* offers the same sacrifice to the Eternal Father. (CCC 1348)

11. Who instituted the sacrifice of the Eucharist?

Jesus Christ instituted the sacrifice of the Eucharist when He instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist during His last supper with the Apostles, and said that this should be done in memory of His passion. (CCC 1341)

12. To whom is the Holy Mass offered?

The Holy Mass is offered to God alone, but it may be celebrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin and the saints.

13. Who shares in the fruits of the Mass?

The entire Church shares in the fruits of the Mass, but more particularly the priest, those who assist at Mass, and those for whom the Mass is offered, both living and dead. (CCC 1371)

14. What is the Order of the Mass?

The Order of the Mass is as follows (CCC 1348-1355):

Introductory Rites

- Entrance
- Greeting
- Penitential Act (“I confess to Almighty God...”)
- Glory to God in the highest– omitted during Advent and Lent.
- Collect

Liturgy of the Word

- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading –on Sundays and solemnities.
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel Reading
- Homily
- Profession of Faith (“I believe in God ...”) – on Sundays, solemnities, and special occasions
- Universal Prayer

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar
- Prayer over the Offerings
- Eucharistic Prayer
 - Preface
 - Holy, Holy, Holy
 - First half of prayer, including Consecration
 - Mystery of Faith
 - Second half of prayer
- The Lord's Prayer (The “Our Father”)
- Sign of Peace
- Lamb of God
- Communion
- Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rites

- Optional announcements
- Greeting and Blessing
- Dismissal

Pay attention to this order when attending Mass!!!

THE WAY TO ASSIST AT MASS

15. What is required in order to assist at Holy Mass well and profitably?

To assist at Holy Mass well and profitably two things are necessary: (1) Modesty of person and (2) Devotion of heart.

Modesty of person consists especially in being modestly dressed, in maintaining silence and recollection and, observing proper posture (kneeling, standing, sitting) at appropriate times during the Mass. (CCC 1387)

True devotion is best practiced by doing the following: (1) From the very beginning to unite our intention with that of the priest, offering the Holy Eucharist to God for the ends for which it was instituted. (2) To accompany the priest in each prayer and action of the Mass. (3) To meditate on the passion and death of Jesus Christ and to heartily detest our sins, which have been the cause of them. (4) To go to Communion, or at least to make an Act of Spiritual Communion when one is unable to receive the Eucharist sacramentally. (CCC 1388)

16. How do you say the Act of Spiritual Communion?

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”

Note: Acts of Adoration and Thanksgiving should also be said after the Spiritual Communion just as if one received Holy Communion sacramentally.

LESSON 5 THE PRACTICE OF THE VIRTUES

VIRTUES AND VICES IN GENERAL

1. What is a supernatural virtue?

A supernatural virtue is a quality infused by God into the soul by which the soul acquires inclination, facility, and promptness to know good and do it toward eternal life. Virtue is a good habit or disposition of the soul, and is called “supernatural” if it is infused by God and proceeds from a supernatural motive, such as the glory of God.

2. How many principal virtues are there?

The principal virtues are seven: three theological virtues (faith, hope and charity), and four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance). The three theological virtues are supernatural virtues; the four cardinal virtues are natural virtues. These will all be treated in the next sections of this Lesson.

3. What is a vice?

A vice is the opposite of virtue. It is a bad habit or evil disposition of the soul to shirk good and do evil, arising from the frequent repetition of evil acts.

4. What difference is there between a sin and a vice?

Between sin and vice there is this difference that sin is a passing act, whereas vice is a bad habit, contracted by continually falling into some sin.

5. Are there different kinds of vice?

There are seven capital vices: Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy and Sloth. These vices will be treated in another section after the virtues.

THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

6. What are the theological virtues?

The theological virtues are: Faith, Hope and Charity.

7. Why are Faith, Hope and Charity called theological virtues?

Faith, Hope and Charity are called theological virtues, because they have God as their immediate and principal object, and are *infused* by Him. “Infused” means that they are not acquired by our personal efforts, but come directly from Him.

8. How can the theological virtues have God for their immediate object?

The theological virtues have God for their immediate object, in this way that by Faith we believe in God, and believe all He has revealed; by Hope, we hope to possess Him; and by Charity, we love God and in Him we love our neighbor and ourselves.

9. When does God infuse the theological virtues into the soul?

God in His goodness infuses the theological virtues into the soul when He gives us His sanctifying grace. Hence when receiving Baptism, we were enriched with these virtues and, along with them, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

10. Is it enough toward salvation, to have received the theological virtues in Baptism?

For one who has come to the use of reason, it is not enough to have received the infused, theological virtues in Baptism. It is also necessary to make frequent acts of Faith, Hope and Charity.

11. When are we obliged to make acts of Faith, Hope and Charity?

We are obliged to make acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, when we come to the use of reason; often during life; and when in danger of death.



Fig 4.5.1 Painting of Faith, Hope and Charity

FAITH

12. What is Faith?

Faith is a supernatural virtue, which God infuses into our souls, and by which, relying on the authority of God Himself, we believe everything which He has revealed and which through His Church He proposes for our belief.

13. How do we know the truths God has revealed?

We know the revealed truths by means of the Church, which is infallible in teaching these truths; that is, by means of the pope, the successor of St. Peter, and by means of the bishops, the successors to the Apostles, who were taught by Jesus Christ Himself.

14. Are we certain of the truths the Church teaches us?

We are most certain of the truths the Church teaches, because Jesus Christ promised that He would send the Holy Spirit. “He, the Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things” (John 14:26).

15. By what sin is the Faith lost?

Faith is lost by denying or voluntarily doubting even a single article proposed for our belief.

16. How is lost Faith recovered

Lost Faith is recovered by repenting of the sin committed and by believing anew all that the Church believes.

17. Can we comprehend all the truths of Faith?

No, we cannot comprehend all the truths of Faith, because some of these truths are mysteries.

18. What are mysteries?

Mysteries are truths above reason and which we are to believe even though we cannot comprehend them.

19. Why must we believe mysteries?

We must believe mysteries because they are revealed to us by God, who, being infinite Truth and Goodness, can neither deceive nor be deceived.

20. Are mysteries contrary to reason?

Mysteries are above reason, but not contrary to reason; and even reason itself persuades us to accept the mysteries.

21. Why cannot the mysteries be contrary to reason?

The mysteries cannot be contrary to reason, because the same God who has given us the light of reason has also revealed the mysteries, and He cannot contradict Himself.

HOPE

22. What is Hope?

Hope is a supernatural virtue, infused by God into the soul, by which we desire and expect that eternal life that God has promised to His servants, as well as the means necessary to attain it.

23. What grounds have we to hope that God will give us Heaven and the means necessary to secure it?

We hope that God will give us Heaven and the necessary means to attain it, because the all-merciful God, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, has promised it to those who faithfully serve Him; and, being both faithful and omnipotent, He never fails in His promises.

24. What are the conditions necessary to obtain Heaven?

The conditions necessary to obtain Heaven are the grace of God, the practice of good works, and perseverance until death in His holy love.

25. How is Hope lost?

Hope is lost as often as Faith is lost; and it is also lost by the sins of despair and presumption.

26. How is lost Hope regained?

Lost Hope is regained by repenting of the sin committed, and by exciting anew confidence in the divine goodness.

CHARITY

27. What is Charity?

Charity is a supernatural virtue, infused into our soul by God, by which we love God above all for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

28. Why should we love God?

We should love God because He is the Supreme Good, infinitely good and perfect; and also, because He commands us to do so, and because of the many benefits we receive from Him.

29. How are we to love God?

We are to love God above all things else, with our whole heart, with our whole mind, with our whole soul, and with all our strength.

30. What is meant by loving God above all other things?

To love God above all other things means to prefer Him to all creatures, even the dearest and most perfect, and to be willing to lose everything rather than offend Him or cease to love Him.

31. What is meant by loving God with our whole heart?

To love God with our whole heart means consecrating all our affections to Him.

32. What is meant by loving God with our whole mind?

To love God with our whole mind means directing all our thoughts to Him.

33. What is meant by loving God with our whole soul?

To love God with our whole soul means consecrating to Him the use of all the powers of our soul.

34. What is meant by loving God with all our strength?

To love God with all our strength means striving to grow ever more and more in His love, and so to act that all our actions should have as their one motive and end the love of Him and the desire of pleasing Him.

35. Why should we love our neighbor?

We should love our neighbor for the love of God, because God commands it, and because every man is made to God's image.

36. Are we obliged to love even our enemies?

We are obliged to love even our enemies, because they are our neighbors also and because Jesus Christ has made this love the object of an express command.

37. What is meant by loving our neighbor as ourselves?

To love our neighbor as ourselves means to wish him and do him, as far as possible, the good which we ought to wish for ourselves, and not to wish or to do him any evil.

38. When do we love ourselves as we ought?

We love ourselves as we ought when we endeavor to serve God and to place all our happiness in Him.

39. How is charity lost?

Charity is lost by mortal sin, but it is regained by making acts of love for God, by duly repenting and making a good confession.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES

40. Are there other virtues besides the theological virtues?

Yes, and they are called *moral* virtues. Unlike theological virtues which are infused by God, moral virtues are acquired by practice. The theological virtues perfect our faculties to attain God supernaturally, but the moral virtues perfect our will, our appetites and our exterior actions. The chief moral virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, and are called *cardinal* virtues.

41. Why are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance called Cardinal virtues?

Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance are called cardinal virtues because all the other moral virtues are founded upon, and hinged around them. In Latin, *cardo* means hinge.

42. What is Prudence?

Prudence is the virtue that directs each action towards its lawful end and consequently seeks the proper means in order that the action be well accomplished in all points of view and thereby pleasing to Our Lord.

43. What is Justice?

Justice is the virtue which disposes us to give everyone what belongs to him.

44. What is Fortitude?

Fortitude is the virtue which renders us courageous to the point of not fearing danger, not even death, for the service of God.

45. What is temperance?

Temperance disposes us to control the inordinate desires that please the senses and makes us use temporal goods with moderation.

OTHER MORAL VIRTUES

46. Which are some of the other moral virtues in addition to the cardinal virtues?

Some of the other moral virtues are filial piety, patriotism, obedience, veracity, patience, and most importantly, religion.

Filial piety disposes us to honor and love our parents; patriotism disposes us to honor and love our country; obedience disposes us to do the will of our superiors; veracity (or truthfulness) disposes us to tell the truth; patience disposes us to bear trials and difficulties; and the virtue of religion – the highest of the moral virtues – disposes us to give God the worship that is due Him.

There are other moral virtues not listed above, such as those that are opposed to the capital vices. See below.

THE CAPITAL VICICES

47. Which are the capital vices?

The vices called capital are seven: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth.

Pride – is the inordinate desire of our own excellence or esteem.

Covetousness – is an inordinate desire of riches.

Lust – is an inordinate desire of the pleasures of the flesh.

Anger – is an inordinate desire of revenge.

Gluttony – is an inordinate desire of food or drink.

Envy – is the sadness at another’s good, thinking that it reduces our own excellence.

Sloth – is the laziness of mind and heart to pursue good things.

48. Why are these vices called capital?

They are called capital because they are the head and fount of many other vices and sins. For example,

Pride – leads to vain-glory, boasting, hypocrisy, ambition, arrogance, contempt of others, etc.

Covetousness – leads to usury, fraud, theft, hoarding, etc.

Lust – leads to fornication, adultery, immodest looks, touches, thoughts and desires, etc.

Anger – leads to hatred, threats, cursing, murder, etc.

Gluttony – leads to drunkenness, loss of self-control, violence, etc.

Envy – leads to detraction, back-biting, rash judgment, etc.

Sloth – leads to negligence, lack of devotion, aversion from God, etc.

49. What moral virtues are opposed to the capital vices?

The moral virtues opposed to the capital vices are *humility* (the opposite of pride), *liberality* (the opposite of covetousness), *chastity* (the opposite of lust), *meekness* (the opposite of anger), *temperance* (the opposite of gluttony), *brotherly love* (the opposite of envy), and *diligence* or *zeal* (the opposite of sloth). Ordinarily one overcomes the capital vices through the practice of their opposite virtues.

LESSON 6 OBSERVANCE OF THE BEATITUDES

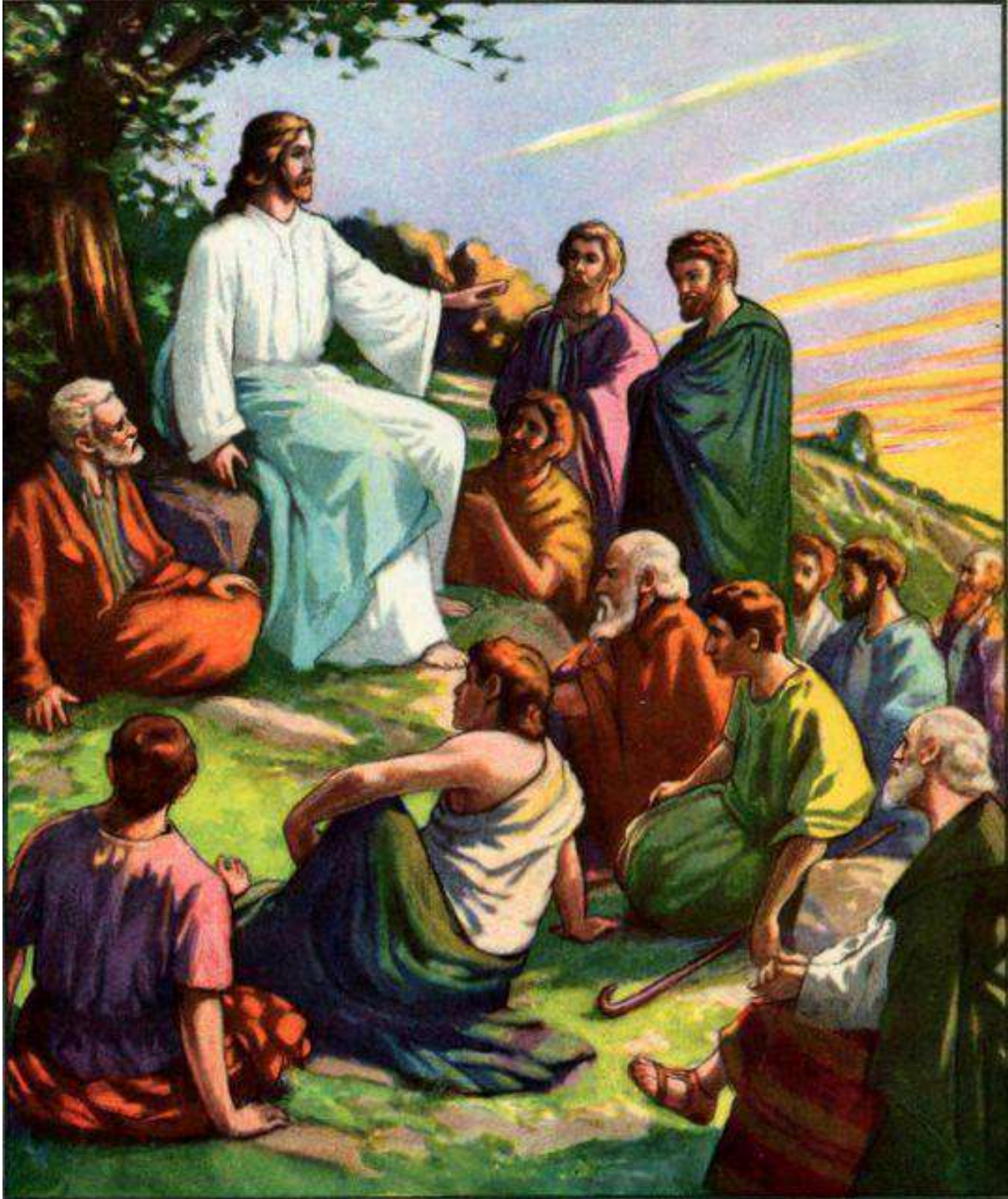


Fig 4.6.1 Jesus Giving the Eight Beatitudes

1. Did Christ propose anything more besides the practice of the virtues?

Yes, he recommended the observance of the Beatitudes (from the Latin *beatitudo*, which means happiness or blessedness). The Beatitudes are the qualities that describe those who possess happiness in this life and in the life to come. By striving to have these qualities, we can hope to be happy in this life and in the next.

2. What are the Beatitudes?

The Beatitudes are the following (Matt 5:1-10):

1. Blessed (or happy) are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
2. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.
3. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.
4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called children of God.
8. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. Why did Jesus Christ propose the Beatitudes to us?

Jesus Christ proposed the Beatitudes to us to make us detest the maxims of the world, and to invite us to love and practice the maxims of the Gospel.

4. Who are they whom the world calls happy?

The world calls those happy who abound in riches and honors, who lead a pleasant life, and who meet with no occasions of suffering.

5. Who are the poor in spirit whom Jesus Christ calls happy?

The poor in spirit are, according to the Gospel, those whose hearts are detached from riches; who make good use of riches should they have any; who do not seek them too eagerly, if they have none; and who suffer the loss of such things with resignation when deprived of them.

6. Who are the meek?

The meek are those who act tenderly toward their neighbor, bear patiently with his defects, and accept the offences and injuries they receive from him without contention, resentment, or vengeance.

7. Who are they that mourn, yet are called happy?

They that mourn, yet are called happy, are they who suffer tribulations with resignation, and who mourn over sins committed, over the evils and scandals that prevail in the world, over Paradise because it is so distant, and over the danger there is of losing it.

8. Who are they that hunger and thirst after justice?

They that hunger and thirst after justice, are those who ardently desire to increase daily more and more in divine grace and in the exercise of good and virtuous works.

9. Who are the merciful?

The merciful are those who love their neighbor in God and for God's sake, compassionate his miseries, spiritual as well as corporal, and endeavor to succor him according to their means and position.

10. Who are the clean of heart?

The clean of heart are those who retain no affection for sin and keep aloof from it, and who above all else avoid every sort of immodesty and impurity.

11. Who are the peace-makers?

The peace-makers are those who preserve peace with their neighbor and with themselves, and who endeavor to bring about peace and concord between those who are at variance.

12. Who are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake?

They, who suffer persecution for justice' sake, are those who patiently bear derision, reproof, and persecution for the sake of the Faith and of the law of Jesus Christ.

13. What do the various rewards promised by Jesus Christ in the Beatitudes denote?

The various rewards promised by Jesus Christ in the Beatitudes all denote under different names the eternal glory of Paradise.

14. Do the Beatitudes procure us only the glory of Paradise?

The Beatitudes not only procure us the glory of Paradise, but are also the means of leading a happy life, as far as this is possible here on earth.

15. Can those who follow the maxims of the world be called truly happy?

No, because they have no true peace of soul, and are in danger of being lost eternally.

LESSON 7 THE WORKS OF MERCY AND OTHER RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

1. Besides attending Mass and receiving the sacraments, what else can we do to increase sanctifying grace and gain actual graces?

We can also increase sanctifying grace and gain actual graces:

- a) By prayer.
- b) By good works.
- c) By other religious practices.

2. What is prayer?

Prayer is speaking lovingly to God. This subject has already been discussed in previous lessons.

3. What is a good work?

A good work is anything we do for the love of God, such as the works of mercy.

4. What are the works of mercy?

There are two kinds: *corporal* and *spiritual* works of mercy. The corporal works of mercy are those that relieve the material needs of our neighbor. The spiritual works of mercy are those that relieve the spiritual needs of our neighbor.

5. What are the corporal works of mercy?

The corporal works of mercy are these seven:

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To visit the imprisoned.
5. To shelter the homeless.
6. To visit the sick.
7. To bury the dead.



Fig 4.7.1 St. Francesca Romana Feeding the Hungry

6. What are the spiritual works of mercy?

The spiritual works of mercy are these seven:

1. To admonish the sinner.
2. To teach the ignorant.
3. To counsel the doubtful.
4. To comfort the sorrowful.
5. To bear wrongs patiently.
6. To forgive all injuries.
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

7. Besides ordinary prayers and the works of mercy what other practices may be observed to increase grace?

Besides ordinary prayers and the works of mercy there are special religious *devotions* that may be practiced to increase grace.

Devotions are **not** obligations, but are recommended to increase grace and enhance our spiritual life. Examples of these special devotions are the following:

1. The recitation of the Holy Rosary.
2. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament.
3. The Way of the Cross.
4. Novenas.
5. Retreats.
6. Processions.

8. What are novenas?

Novenas are devotions carried on for a period of *nine* days in order to honor God, the angels or the saints, or to ask for special graces or favors. Novenas may be done privately at home, or publicly in the church.

9. What are retreats?

Retreats are a series of spiritual exercises, attended by a group of priests, nuns, or lay people, carried on to retreat or step back from the activities of day-to-day life, in order to find time for reflection and union with God. Retreats are usually held in schools, churches or retreat houses.

10. What are processions?

Processions are *public* forms of worship usually held to celebrate important events in the life of Christ, to commemorate particular doctrines of our faith, to make reparation for sins committed, to offer thanksgiving, or to ask for special favors. In a procession the faithful, usually carrying candles, walk in an orderly manner while saying prayers or chanting songs. Images (on vehicles or hand-carried) often join the procession and terminate in the church.

LESSON 8 THE OBSERVANCE OF THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

1. What particular means has Jesus Christ recommended for attaining Christian perfection?

For attaining Christian perfection Jesus Christ recommended the practice of the *evangelical counsels*; namely, voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and perfect obedience. (CCC 915)

Voluntary poverty is the renunciation of all material possessions for the love of God. *Perpetual chastity* is the renunciation of the right to marry, or the choice to remain a virgin for life. *Perfect obedience* is the complete subjection of one's will to that of a superior.

2. Why are they called evangelical counsels?

They are called “evangelical” because they are found in the Gospels. They are called “counsels” because they are an *invitation*, not a *command*. In other words, everyone is invited to observe them, but not everyone is obliged to keep them. God understands that not all can keep the evangelical counsels.

3. Then who is required to observe the evangelical counsels?

Only those who have bound themselves by vow to keep them, such as those in the *religious state* – the nuns, the sisters, and the brothers in various religious orders. (CCC 1618)

4. What is the religious state?

The religious state is a permanent way of life by which the faithful, as members of a community or as individuals, bind themselves to observe the evangelical counsels by vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

5. How do people in the religious state live a community life?

People who choose the religious state leave their families and live together with other religious in a convent, a monastery or a priory.



Fig 4.8.1 Dominican Sisters of Mary (Ann Arbor)

6. Can people who live in the world also attain Christian perfection?

Yes, if they live not according to the spirit of the world, but according to the spirit of Jesus Christ. In fact, most people in the world strive for Christian perfection simply by observing the commandments and practicing their faith. However, there are a few who, without actually entering the religious state, choose to become *lay members* of a particular, religious order. Instead of making solemn vows, lay members make a serious *promise* (which does not bind under pain of sin) to live their life in accordance with the spirituality of the Order with which they choose to associate.

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Fig 4 Christ the Good Shepherd

Artist: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bartolomé_Esteban_Perez_Murillo_-_Christ_the_Good_Shepherd_-_WGA16374.jpg

Fig 4.1.1 The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an Example of Public Prayer

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Fig 4.1.2 Improper and Proper Praying Posture

Poor Praying Posture. Free photo by *Kateřina Hartlová* from *Pixabay.com*

<https://pixabay.com/photos/girl-childhood-teddy-bear-4485720/>

Good Praying Posture: <https://www.christiansupplies.co.nz/product/PR028/print-two-children-praying/> (The store site has a Pinterest button, indicating that its product ad image may be shared for non-commercial use.)

Fig 4.2.1 Christ Teaching the Apostles how to Pray the Our Father

A watercolor painting by James Tissot (1836-1902)

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Lord%27s_Prayer_\(Le_Pater_Noster\)_-_James_Tissot.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_The_Lord%27s_Prayer_(Le_Pater_Noster)_-_James_Tissot.jpg)

Fig 4.3.1 The Angel Gabriel Appeared to Mary (The Annunciation)

Artist: Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674)

<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/438724>

Fig 4.3.2 Mary Visited her Cousin Elizabeth (The Visitation)

Artist: Miguel Cabrera (1695-1768)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_Visitaci3n_-_Miguel_Cabrera.jpg

Fig 4.4.1 Priest Celebrating Holy Mass

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Navy_031006-N-9742R-002_Lt._Cmdr._Allen_R._Kuss,_the_Roman_Catholic_priest_ aboard_USS_Enterprise_\(CVN_65\)_administers_the_Sunday_evening_Catholic_Mass_service.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:US_Navy_031006-N-9742R-002_Lt._Cmdr._Allen_R._Kuss,_the_Roman_Catholic_priest_ aboard_USS_Enterprise_(CVN_65)_administers_the_Sunday_evening_Catholic_Mass_service.jpg)

Fig 4.5.1 Painting of Faith, Hope and Charity

Artist: Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schnorr_von_Carolsfeld_-_Glaube,_Liebe,_Hoffnung.jpg

Fig 4.6.1 Jesus Giving the Eight Beatitudes

Source: Archive.org

<https://ia801008.us.archive.org/24/items/vinBibleilluscolor2/93A02A5B-7CC4-483C-A978-F08BF97903C3.jpeg>

Fig 4.7.1 St. Francesca Romana Feeding the Hungry

Artist: Giovanni Battista Gaulli (1639-1709)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baciccio-Saint_Francesca_Romana_Giving_Alms.jpg

Fig 4.8.1 Dominican Sisters of Mary (Ann Arbor)

From an article in *Integrated Catholic Life*TM by Sarah Reinhard, 2014. A Pinterest button is placed near the image, indicating that the image may be shared for non-commercial use.

<http://www.integratedcatholiclife.org/2014/12/reinhard-sr-joseph-andrew-and-her-orders-new-rosary-album/>